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Tramps and their Excuses

A Study of the Writing of Travellers in Borneo
in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

M.Phil Thesis

discipline: Literature

The Open University

Trevor Millum, B.A. (Hons), Ph.D.

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Tramps and their Excuses
A Study of the Writing of Travellers in Borneo in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

Synopsis

The aim of the study was to examine travel writing over a significant period of time in order to understand more about the nature of travel writing in itself and to determine what changes may have taken place within the genre over time. A secondary aim was to carry out an exploration of the S E Asia Collection in the Library of the University of Hull.

In order to focus the study on a manageable body of work, the geographical area was narrowed to that of the island of Borneo and the texts to those of book-length.

The study began with a reading of a wide range of material which related to the subject of the thesis. From this essentially exploratory bibliographical research arose three things. Firstly, a body of material which could be reasonably defined as travel writing about Borneo was identified. Secondly, a broad categorization of sub-groups within that body of material began to emerge. Coincidentally, further ideas about the nature of travel writing, particularly in the context of the exploitation of East by the West, developed.

There followed a detailed and careful review of the texts which served to refine the characteristics of the sub-groups and show the ways in which changes in the genre had taken place over time.

The thesis concludes that while there have been significant changes in the nature of travel writing, there is an interesting degree of continuity, for example, curiosity as a motivating force and confidence as a characteristic. And where a writer writes from within the role of explorer, there is a remarkable number of characteristics which remain constant over time.

Throughout the period under study, different kinds of writer have become travellers, with varying motives, producing new kinds of travel writing: as the world has become smaller, the focus of the travel writer has become narrower and the ethos more personal.

Contents

Chapter One	
Introduction	page 3
Chapter Two	
Tramps with an Excuse	page 15
Chapter Three	
Tramps with Different Excuses	page 59
Chapter Four	
Tramps without an Excuse?	page 84
Chapter 5	
The Last Tramps?	page 119
Bibliography	page 136

Chapter One - Introduction

The survey which follows deals with writings of travellers in Borneo in the 19th and 20th centuries. Within those boundaries, chosen for reasons of personal interest and experience, I have selected for detailed study a wide variety of books which reflect the range of travel writing available. In the process of the survey I hope to reflect on the nature of travel writing and to draw some conclusions applicable beyond its immediate geographical framework.

The nature of the material

I have been fortunate in having one of the best collections of literature from and about South East Asia available to me at Hull University Library. The University's has a distinguished Centre for S E Asian Studies whose Professor V T King has provided invaluable assistance. Sifting through the S E Asia Collection enabled me to determine the body of texts which constitutes the material for the following study.

The list of that body of texts provided in the Bibliography constitutes the Collection's book-length works of travel writing about Borneo and, therefore, most of the major works in English together with a number in translation and two in French. To my knowledge, no survey of this material has been carried out apart from Professor King's *The Best of Borneo Travel* which was published just as this thesis was being completed. The two works differ, however, in that the former is an anthology of Borneo travel writing while the latter presents an analysis of and commentary on the texts. The significant omissions from this survey of Borneo travel writing are likely to be untranslated Dutch texts, of which, of course, there are a number, given the Dutch colonial interest in the island.

I have restricted the study to book-length texts about travelling in Borneo, excluding articles from newspapers or periodicals, though these would make an interesting additional study. Some books about the region I have excluded because they are essentially works of geography, botany, anthropology and so on rather than descriptions of travel. For example, I have not included Hugh Low's "Sarawak - notes during a residence in that country with H H the Rajah Brooke". From his

exploits in climbing Kinabalu and the history of his time in Sarawak and Labuan we know Low was an intrepid explorer and a great traveller on behalf of both Brooke and the British Government *but* - apart from three short chapters at the end - his book is not travel writing. I have included writers such as St John and Hose, who though resident (i.e. stationary) in the area for some time, wrote accounts of journeys made *from their familiar localities to unfamiliar localities*. It is, after all, the account of a journey, of movement, rather than of a stay which is the stuff of travel writing.

A first reading of the material suggests that there is a continuum from the notes of the learned explorer on the one hand to the anecdotes of the largely ignorant tourist on the other. The explorer goes where others of his race or culture or nation have not been before, the tourist goes where others have cleared the way and in between there are various travellers who may do either. All can produce travel writing, though at one extreme the explorer's account becomes purely academic and, at the other, the tourist's becomes almost commercial: hints, tips and best buys for all.

There are no agreed definitions of what constitutes travel writing, but "writing about travel" seems a good starting point. This, though, could include a bus timetable, a Thomson Holiday brochure, a poem about the London to Brighton rally as well as an account of the Oxford University Expedition to examine the flora and fauna of Guinea...

Let us examine these examples more closely. A timetable is writing which concerns travel. What is it that makes us feel that it isn't, however, "Travel Writing"? Above all, it isn't personal - it is the most neutral form of writing, offering no opinions and telling no Story. A holiday brochure, on the other hand, certainly offers opinions - sun drenched beaches, crystal clear blue sea and romantic night life - but the opinions are merely commercial creations and still have no sense of personal experience. If Mr Thomson were to write a paragraph about *his* trip to Tunisia, that would be different...

A poem about a trip from London to Brighton is another matter. I would be inclined to include it within the aegis of travel writing so long as it was based on a real and specific journey. Its form, though unusual for travel writing, need not debar it. Its subject, though familiar, is no reason to disallow it either. There is a feeling that Travel Writing should be about

the exotic, but Theroux's *Kingdom By the Sea* is as much a part of Travel Writing as *Two Years In Tibet*, perhaps more so.

To return to the examples suggested above. The university's expedition may be written up in a variety of ways. If it is written in an academic register which *excludes the personal* from the description of what it was like to *make the journey*, which is central to Travel Writing, I would exclude it from consideration. However, there are very few expeditionary documents which take so impersonal a form.

What then can we suggest as working criteria for travel writing?

- It is personal. Written in the first person, travel writing constitutes a kind of autobiography. As King writes, "We are dealing with a personal record, in which the reader should feel involved" (p xiii).
- It tends to be more specific than general. For instance, descriptions tend to be of particular people rather than about tribes or races, a particular stretch of water rather than a whole river - though, of course, the writer may make generalizations from the particular.
- It is narrative rather than explanatory or discursive, though the writer may pause to argue a point or place something in context.
- It is sequential in time and space - it follows everyday conventions of one event following from another, and one place being visited after another in a logical geographical order.
- It is, or purports to be, factual. In this way travel writing exhibits another similarity with autobiography.
- It attempts to convey a feeling of *what it was like to be there*. This is a quality which distinguishes travel writing from the report of an expedition, in which that kind of evocation is incidental.
- It tends to concern itself with the unfamiliar rather than the familiar - or defamiliarizes the familiar, perhaps, as with Theroux (see below).

That travel writing is about the unfamiliar may be disputed. Theroux's recent writing about the New York subway, for instance, is included in the Granta book of Travel Writing (1991). Perhaps it is wrongly included. On the other hand, to many of his readers, the NY subway is a country only a little less foreign and dangerous than the Borneo jungle. There are other examples of homely subject matter - John Hillaby

walking along the upland paths of the UK or Theroux journeying around Britain's coastline. In these cases there is either something about the writing which makes the familiar unfamiliar and refreshing, "makes it new" to take Pound's dictum, or there is something about the way of travelling which is unfamiliar. Not many people actually travel all the way around the British coast, after all. But if the journey is totally familiar and the writing equally unexceptional, for example my description of the daily car journey to work, it would not - in my opinion - qualify as Travel Writing.

The model explorer

Before embarking on a more detailed study I read the accounts of sixteen Borneo travellers in order to get a feel for the variety and nature of the material. In this way tentative categories or groups of writers began to emerge. These tended to be defined by both chronology and motivation. The categories overlapped in time, yet there was a clear development from the serious collector and classifier of the nineteenth century through to the free-and-easy traveller of the later twentieth century. The largest and most significant group were the writer-explorers who worked from the mid-nineteenth century through to the 1920s.

It was this group which I then looked at more closely in order to establish some kind of model of this type of traveller. I was gradually able to establish what I felt were the characteristics of a typical writer-explorer. The following is a description of that model.

The typical explorer is knowledgeable about the country through which he travels either through his own research or the experience of living in the country over a period of time. He has companions of similar status to his own and is generally in charge or joint-charge of the expedition. The expedition employs numerous servants, whether guides, interpreters, cooks or porters. There is much baggage, including provision for samples of flora and fauna to be preserved.

The expedition enjoys the backing (official or unofficial) of either government or well placed civil servants and/or some prestigious learned society. The explorer may also have been

resident as a government official in that country (or another country of similar character) for some time.

He has firm opinions and believes that he is serving mankind in one way or another. His attitude to the native population is benign paternalism combined with clear cut prejudices about certain racial groups (and about women). The explorer is male and white.

His style of writing is balanced and urbane, tending towards understatement and dry wit. He is modest but the tone of his writing reveals a complete confidence in the rightness of his actions and beliefs. The writing, narrative in style, is likely to be impersonal in character, to lack humour and to include a good deal of anecdote.

Like all models, the above is a somewhat dry and lifeless construction. However, it will serve as a useful yardstick against which to measure the protagonists of the following chapter and a model with which to compare those later travellers who had many guises, only some of whom would have claimed to have been "explorers".

Motive

Charles Miller (*Black Borneo*, Museum Press 1946, p7) said that an explorer is "a tramp with an excuse". At first glance this is a throw-away line from a rather undistinguished travel writer. What it does, however, is to highlight the motive of travellers. The single most important fact about travel is that it involves movement and that is the element which the protagonists enjoy, or at the very least, what they, in their role as writers, expect their readers to enjoy. Most travellers, though, have felt the need to cloak their journey in more serious clothes; in other words, without an excuse they would merely be tramps. The most common excuse for the travellers of the nineteenth century in S E Asia was that of exploration.

If we examine the long line of Borneo travellers we will see how well the excuse applies. It will do very well for most of the writing travellers whose books occupy the exploration and travel shelves up to, roughly, the 1920s. As the 20th Century grows older, however, that excuse wears thinner and we find other excuses being offered: to do good, to make a film, to have fun, to do something no one else has done - until finally we

come upon those who offer no excuse at all. By the second half of the twentieth century it has become acceptable to travel for travel's sake - although in order to be published some other element might need to be added. It might even be that the excuse is to write a book about it - thus completing the circle!

The true *explorer* was a creation of the Enlightenment and continued to be nurtured by the spirit of nineteenth century Science where the pursuit of knowledge as a motive was quite unchallengeable. The love of classifying, catching, stuffing, preserving went beyond an interest in things new to become a kind of academic kleptomania. Prior to the Enlightenment, the excuse was not the pursuit of knowledge but the pursuit of trade and though, of course, trade and economic rivalry continue to be significant factors, they had, with the 19th Century explosion of exploration, to yield pride of place to a different kind of exploitation. This is still the exploitation of the powerful by the weak but it has the appearance of neutrality or even benevolence, consisting as it does of an invasion which takes possession of less tangible objects than the products or the territory of a people. It is an intellectual violation which extracts not ore or cash crops but nuggets of information, lore, custom and modes of behaviour. The explorer/violator implies that he or she has the right to know *everything* about the explored/violated, from religious beliefs to sexual mores - while the explored is only permitted to know certain restricted things about the explorer. Small wonder that the explored resort at times to deception, tall stories and ingenuous misunderstanding.

Of course, a number of the great 19th Century explorers had other excuses, other motives, missionary zeal being one of them. Livingstone's motives were rooted in a fervent desire to establish Christianity and eradicate slavery. The counterweight to this pious motive for exploration and hence travel is to be found in the gentlemen who travelled the globe in order to hunt (looking for *sport*, as they called it).

These, however, are the exceptions. Up until the 1920s or 30s, the majority of travellers in Borneo who wrote *were* explorers of one kind or another. Towards the end of that time explorations begin to merge into expeditions. These sound almost as grand but manage to describe a journey which while difficult and high-minded (an expedition certainly couldn't be undertaken merely for pleasure or whim: its whole *raison*

d'être is a sense of purpose) may not be covering entirely *new* ground.

These travellers, whatever their motives, moved through a world where Western power and domination was taken for granted. In some cases, as we will see, the explorers are themselves the official representatives of imperialism: government officers of one kind or another. Even where they are not, they have formal or informal contacts with the imperial masters. (With so many practical difficulties to contend with, it was the co-operation of officialdom that made many of the journeys possible. There were no air-drops or antibiotics but you could rely on the local Resident to look after you, lend you guides - and a good deal more. For the outsider, travel into the interior of Borneo is probably more difficult now than it was a century ago.)

The West's View of the East

The imperial worldview together with centuries of condescending Western interpretations of Eastern culture inevitably informed the attitudes and actions of the travellers. Edward Said in his seminal work *Orientalism*, makes this abundantly clear. The awareness that all intellectual activity, even supposedly neutral scientific investigation, is underpinned by and suffused with our socio-political attitudes is not new. Said's work is based on the proposition that this is even more crucially the case when it comes to the West's view of the East. *Orientalism* demonstrates convincingly the existence of a set of prejudices and stereotypes about the East in Western culture. What remains to be investigated is whether these are different *in kind* from the prejudices and stereotypes which exist in other political/geographical situations. European views of the "Dark Continent", for example, or of American-Indian culture. What about Roman views on "barbarians" or perhaps more significant, Japanese or Chinese stereotypes about the West?

What is interesting, though, in the study of Western writers about this particular part of the Orient, is the *extent* to which they accepted the colonial worldview, the West's presentation of the rest of the world as a variety of "others". From the standpoint of the 1990s, it is easy to assume that all explorers, government officials or colonial officers shared a common view

of the world. Clearly, this is rarely, if ever, the case at any historical moment.

Hence we should not be surprised that perceptive and critical comments about Western civilization are being made as early as the 1860s by writers like Wallace and that even at the height of Imperialism serious reservations were voiced by those with real knowledge and experience of colonised and "protected" peoples. By the 1930s the natural superiority and right to rule of the white man is seriously questioned by writers such as Harrisson, a trend confirmed by the collapse of Western rule in the Second World War.

Nevertheless, even though colonial attitudes were crumbling, some travellers (Johnson, Miller, for example) retained them well into the post-war period. The position of Malcolm MacDonald is interesting in that here was a man who was, more than any of the other travellers, the official representative of the colonial power in the region. Yet his writing reveals a person less condescending, less racist and with fewer assumptions about the superiority of Western values than some of the writers who should have been (we feel) more enlightened.

However, even amongst the anti-colonial, pro-native writers such as Harrisson and Arnold there is still a sense of paternalism, however muted. There is still the sense of the active explorer and the passive explored. Is it possible to explore and not to present oneself in some way (financially, intellectually, technologically, for example) in a superior position? Is it possible to explore and not to exploit?

With his physical and mental impedimenta, his Western obsession with detailed classification, the modern explorer inevitably disrupts local life and, for all his genuinely high principles, assumes a position above the native people. In contrast, and somewhat paradoxically, the modern tramp, like Barclay or O'Hanlon, moves through the landscape causing fewer ripples and dealing with local people on a much more equal basis. With earlier travellers, the emphasis is the other way around. Individuals like Clutterbuck, who was not an explorer, took a more condescending attitude to the people than their contemporaries who were enagaged in exploration.

The Tourist

None of the above can really be classified as tourists, but the nature of the tourist is relevant to any consideration of travel. The malign influence of the tourist is analysed in depth by Krippendorf in *The Holiday Makers*. He brings out very clearly the master-servant relationship between tourist and host but concludes that a relationship of equals, beneficial to both sides, is not only possible but essential in the light of the economic and ecological effects of mass travel.

Is it possible, then, whether as explorer, writer, adventurer or tourist, to travel and observe and not to exploit? Can we imagine an Iban travelling through the Cotswolds, returning and writing up the experience? I think we can. Indeed there are writers from S E Asia who have done just that. Exploitation in the sense that Krippendorf uses the term is not, then, *inevitable*, however usual it might be.

If such visitors exploited the country through which they travelled they have done so in the way that all travellers might be said to do. Indeed the incidence of exploitation might be the other way around, with inhabitants exploiting travellers. These considerations, although not without importance, nevertheless constitute a separate issue.

The Journey

To begin an investigation into travel writing, even in so seemingly limited an area as Borneo, is itself to begin an exploration. When we set out we have some overall objective in mind and we have some other items which we will look out for. But as we travel, we will almost certainly discover other things of interest and be distracted into new areas - just like our subject matter.

Our overall objective is to explore the accounts of a wide selection of the writers who wrote about their travels in Borneo in the 19th and 20th Centuries and to see how far those accounts form a coherent pattern. We will observe the attitudes and motives of the writers, the tone of their writing as well as its content. We will notice how far the accounts adhere to the criteria we outlined earlier. For instance, in terms of the narrative form, one might expect at one extreme a strict day by day journal and at the other an account of a journey

recollected in retrospect and tranquillity. However, even a day by day journal or log cannot include everything; the writer must - and does - select those items worthy of inclusion and exclude those that he or she thinks mundane.

Given that the name Borneo and the term headhunter both have an adventurous ring we might also consider how far the writers are motivated by the *myths* of Borneo and the desire to shock or titillate their readers. An unspoken assumption about travel writing (beyond the "unfamiliar" as discussed above) is that the journey described should be dangerous, and if not dangerous then difficult - and if not difficult at least uncomfortable. Travelling in Borneo always involves some discomfort, usually some difficulty and not infrequently some danger too. Even in 1984, once off the tourist trails, travelling in Borneo, I discovered, was not easy. How far do the writers draw attention to, or ignore, the dangers and difficulties of their travel?

Some motives and attitudes are stated, others may surface as one reads on, still others may only be apparent from a sensitive reading between the lines. Travel is said to broaden the mind. How broad or open minded *are* the traveller-writers? What attitudes and values do they bring to their travel and *did* travel broaden their minds?

Borneo: a brief background

The early history of Borneo is not documented but it is known that it came variously under the influence of China, Hindu empires based in Sumatra and Java and latterly a Muslim empire based in Malacca in what is now West Malaysia. Brunei emerges as the first political entity of consequence, breaking from Malaccan suzerainty and establishing some form of control over all Borneo. Like the majority of rulers who were to follow, effective control extended along coastlines and up major rivers. In the interior, the people continued to live largely unaffected by the political changes beyond.

The Portuguese and Dutch established coastal trading posts in the early 17th century. Brunei's power began a long decline which was accompanied by a rise in Dutch power, at least as far as areas on or near the coast were concerned. The British only began to take an interest in the region from the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Beginning in 1839, though, it was an Englishman, James Brooke, who made the most significant individual impact. Shortly after his arrival in the area he assisted the Sultan of Brunei's uncle in putting down a rebellion in part of Brunei's territories and was rewarded with the title of rajah. So began the extraordinary period of White Rajah rule in Sarawak. By 1850 Brooke's Sarawak (centred around Kuching) was recognized as an independent state, free of Brunei's control. In the course of suppressing both piracy and head-hunting it continued to expand, so that by 1905 it occupied the whole of the present state of Sarawak. This expansion was almost entirely at the expense of Brunei, which itself became a British Protectorate in 1888.

By that time rule had passed to James Brooke's nephew, Charles, and the territory had been granted British protection, though the power of the British government was strictly limited and real power continued to reside with the Brooke family. Charles Vyner Brooke, the third rajah, ruled until 1946.

In the area of Borneo to the North of Brunei, economic rivalry involving the British, Spanish and Dutch eventually resulted in the establishment of a British North Borneo Company in 1881. By the beginning of the 20th century, the Company came to administer virtually the whole of what is now the state of Sabah.

In the vast area to the south of Sabah and Sarawak, the Dutch had expanded from their coastal stations to exercise at least *de jure* control of the remainder of the island. European imperial rivalry was at its height.

The Dutch and the British (either directly or indirectly) continued to administer the island of Borneo until 1941. During this period of imperial power numerous expeditions, official and unofficial, were undertaken into the interior, where *de facto* jurisdiction remained patchy.

During the Second World War, Borneo was invaded by Japan and remained under military occupation until 1945. British and Dutch authority was then re-established. British North Borneo and Sarawak both became crown colonies, ending the century of White Rajah rule in the latter.

The growth of nationalist movements developed more rapidly in Dutch Indonesia and after a brief struggle, independence was conceded. The southern part of Borneo, Kalimantan, became part of the Republic of Indonesia in 1949.

Independence was slower in coming to the British territories. Sarawak and Sabah eventually became part of Malaysia, known as East Malaysia, which gained independence in 1963. Indonesia refused to accept this development and for some years there was a "confrontation" on the Sarawak/Sabah borders with Kalimantan. This continued until 1966. Brunei continued to be a British Protectorate until independence in 1984.

These were the Borneos which travellers encountered. For the most part, it was an out of the way colonial backwater with intriguing associations of danger and oddity which they were visiting. Dutch or British, there were colonial officers with whom it was crucial to establish a working relationship. An introduction from a learned society or a higher government officer was essential.

After the independence of Kalimantan as part of Indonesia, of Sarawak and Sabah as part of Malaysia, and lastly of Brunei, the oiling of the wheels of travel became more problematic, especially during the periods of communist insurgency and of Confrontation. For the Western traveller, though, the island retained its associations of danger and continued to be viewed as something of a backwater. Both these attributes were attractive to the travel writer as we shall see.

Chapter Two - Tramps with an Excuse

This chapter is concerned with the largest group of writers about travel in Borneo, the explorers (see page 6 above). These travellers were very sure about their excuse - indeed, would have felt their work needed no excuse or explanation. The texts are considered in chronological order.

Spenser St.John: *Life in the Forests of the Far East*¹

St.John was one of the travellers of the type who have been resident as a government official in the country for some time and are therefore not only able to explore but have a duty to do so, either to discover more information about the territory or to pursue law-breakers. He is a personage of some importance and is given to naming other significant names. His writing often has more in common with a geography book than a travel narrative and in its regard for detail shares much with Wallace, Hose and other Victorians for whom exploration meant new facts and new facts meant greater knowledge and greater knowledge was felt to be an undeniably worthy objective.

Alongside the curiosity which constitutes the motive for much travel, there is in St.John's writing the feeling of adding to human knowledge and opening up savagery to civilization.

St John is much given to thumbnail sketches of tribes - "They (the Bajus) appear to me to be very much like the Orang Laut, who frequent the small islands to the South of Singapore and about the Malay peninsula; they are generally, however, smaller, and their voices have a sharper intonation than that of the Malays." Such observations can only be made with any certainty by someone who has been in the country for an extended period.

His style is not so much formal as measured, with an Arnoldian affection for the semi-colon. Where, but in the prose of gentlemen of the 18th or 19th century would one find this kind

¹Full details of all the texts studied will be found in the Bibliography.

of phrasing: "...by his imaginative mind and yet determined will, exercised great power over Dayaks by the superiority of his intellect..."? It is reminiscent of a tomb inscription.

Not all his observations are purely academic. There is this delightfully restrained description of a Dayak girl with its hints of a quivering stiff upper lip.

"The Datu possessed a daughter, the loveliest girl in Borneo. I have never seen a native surpass her in figure, or equal her gentle, expressive countenance. She appeared but sixteen years of age, and as she stood near, leaning against the door-post in the most graceful attitude, we had a perfect view of all her perfections. Her dress was slight indeed, consisting of nothing but a short petticoat reaching from her waist to a little above her knees. Her skin was of that light clear brown which is almost the perfection of colour in a sunny clime, and as she was just returning from bathing, her hair unbound fell in great luxuriance over her shoulders. Her eyes were black, not flashing, but rather contemplative, and her features were regular, even her nose was straight." (p302)

Or: "Our host, while declaring that his religion prevented him joining in a glass of whiskey and water, was suddenly seized with such severe spasms in the stomach as to require medicine; we unsmilingly administered a glass of warm whiskey and water, which our host drank with evident gusto, but it required a second to complete the cure." (p297)

Such careful prose is, from time to time, interspersed with sentences of surprising abruptness which give the impression of having come straight from a diary. "Fell down the river till night." (p227)

Some incidents are as common in the days of Spenser St. John as in those of James Barclay and Redmond O'Hanlon in the latter half of the twentieth century, though the former manages to extricate himself earlier and with more dignity. Barclay did not have a government position to maintain or a Victorian audience to write for. "During the dancing of the old people, we enquired whether the young women never danced, and on our promising a gift of a brass chain that the girls wear round the waist to all who would join the elders: there was no lack of competitors. It was mischievously suggested to the Orang kaya's daughter that I was a famous dancer, and it was amusing to notice the eagerness with which the girls besought me to join them; as four drew me gently into the vortex it was impossible to resist,

though I quickly disengaged myself by assuring them that on their split bamboo floors no European could dance." (St. John, p220)

There is another nice comparison with some of the later writers on the subject of local girls: "The Sakarang women are, I think, the handsomest among the Dayaks of Borneo; they have good figures, light and elastic; well formed busts and very interesting, even pretty faces..." (p29) Either customs have changed in Borneo or St John is naive in his conclusion later in the book, when talking of social customs, that "it is said on good authority that these nocturnal visits but seldom result in immorality". (p162) Perhaps customs are as likely to have changed from Victorian times to late 20th Century times in Borneo as in England...

The use of anecdote is central to his style. "I will insert here an anecdote of the public executioner of Sakarang" (p31) (such deliberation!). He continues, "Last year a native was tried and condemned to death for a barbarous murder, and according to the custom in Malay countries, the next day was fixed for carrying out the sentence. A Chinese Christian lad, who was standing near the executioner, said to him earnestly, "What! no time given him for repentance?" "Repentance!" cried the executioner contemptuously. "Repentance! he is not a British subject." A curious confusion of ideas. Both were speaking in English and very good English."

The last two sentences convey much of the tone of St. John's style and demeanour. After this anecdote, he goes on to remark on his first taste of the rambi fruit and the sight of pigs swimming across a river. Prior to the executioner anecdote he mentions, as a *non sequitur*, poisoning, then the gold-working Malau Dayaks.

This is typical of his style which in much of the book reads for what it is: the writing up into continuous prose of the jottings made in a journal, with no real attempt to establish continuity. "To preserve the freshness of my first impressions, I have copied my journal written at the time." The result sometimes leads to moments of surprise, though it can also mean that reading the book palls, as there is little narrative drive.

What the account does contain is a plethora of academic detail including Latin quotations of botanical descriptions (*Ascidia magna, curva, basi inflata, medio constricta, dein ampliata*,

infundibuliformia...) together with his own additions (in English). In a later writer this would have the intention of advertising one's knowledge. In St. John it is no more than his natural style.

There is also detail in the maps provided, given the period. Many later travellers do not include anything like as accurate indications of exactly where the travelling took place.

St John rarely alludes to discomfort, only "tiresome work". There is no mention of mosquitoes, leeches, and so on. Presumably he meets with them but does not think it sufficiently important to mention.

Of humour there is little evidence. The following illustrates the mixture of Victorian humour and admiration of cleanliness. "Today they (the girls of the village) had grown more bold and were evidently making fun of the scrupulous care we were bestowing on our persons while cook was preparing our breakfast. We thought that we would good-humouredly turn the laugh against them, so we selected one who had the dirtiest face among them - and it was difficult to select where all were dirty - and asked her to glance at herself in the looking-glass. She did so, and then passed it round to the others; we then asked them which they thought looked best, cleanliness or dirt: this was received with a universal giggle.

"We had brought with us several dozen cheap looking glasses so we told Iseiom, the daughter of Li Moun, our host, that if she would go and wash her face, we would give her one. She treated the offer with scorn, tossed her head, and went into her father's room. But, about half an hour afterwards, we saw her come in to the house and try to mix quietly with the crowd; but it was of no use, her companions soon noticed she had a clean face, and pushed her into the front to be inspected. She blushing received her looking glass and ran away, amid the laughter of the crowd of girls. The example had a great effect, however, and before evening the following girls had received a looking glass." (There follows a list of 9 names...) (p332)

There is little lyricism in this gentleman's writing. Though his love of the country is apparent beneath the surface, the stiff upper lip seems to preclude its overt expression.

In conclusion, St. John is very close to our model. He is very knowledgeable about the country through which he travels,

both from his own wide experiences and from the reading of others and discussion with others (native and European). He has companions of his own status and numerous guides, interpreters, cooks and porters. There is much baggage, including some provision for samples of flora and fauna to be preserved. He is in charge of the expedition and has the backing of the government - indeed to all intents and purposes, is the government, being resident as a government official for many years. The length of time spent accumulating knowledge and the voracious appetite for facts are apparent in the length, density and authority of the work.

As one would expect, although St John has decided opinions and believes that he is serving mankind, such things are not stated overtly. Judging by his class, situation and the time he was writing it would be unusual, not to say startling, if he did not have strong opinions. The very sureness of the beliefs he holds and which he believes his audience holds makes it unnecessary for him, and writers like him, to state them. The tone of his writing indeed reveals a complete confidence in the rightness of his actions and beliefs. Is it only later, when assumptions about European supremacy and imperialism were beginning to be questioned, that writers begin to feel it necessary to state their beliefs.

His attitude to the native population is not so much benign paternalism as curiosity and academic interest. Very rarely is he denigratory.

His style of writing is balanced and learned, tending towards understatement but lacking wit. Although he has not written straightforward narrative, in other ways St. John is like our model, omitting the very personal from his writing, employing much anecdote and but little humour. He is very much the gentleman explorer.

Frederick Boyle: *Adventures among the Dyaks of Borneo*

Adventures among the Dyaks of Borneo is an account of the journey of a gentleman who probably felt he needed no excuse for anything he undertook. He is not there to collect samples or discover mountains but merely to visit and observe. However, he is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and will presumably report back on his adventures even though there is a feeling that travel in Borneo is more in the nature of an extended Grand Tour than serious exploration. He, together with his brother, is in charge of the expedition which includes numerous servants and has the backing of the government.

Boyle provides an interesting contrast to St. John. He is educated rather than knowledgeable, lacks specific information about his chosen area of travel and has none of the systematic approach of people like St. John (or later, Enriquez or Harrison). As a result his statements tend to be generalizations of little depth, e.g. "Like all Dyaks they were good tempered." Most of his observations on peoples and places are probably roughly accurate but they convey an impression of being second hand.

Boyle has firm opinions based on little more than prejudice. He is inclined to be condescending towards Islam "...for surely the creed of Mahomet is better than none at all" and insulting towards the Chinese with "their usual stupidity and self-confidence" ... "it is difficult to conceive a being upon two legs more clumsy than a Chinaman." (p31) And while he finds upper class Malay women pretty, "as a people the Malays of Sarawak are the ugliest I ever saw."

His feelings of superiority "the instinctive ascendancy of the white race" are nevertheless matched by some very perceptive comments given his time and class. "War and drunkenness, and depopulation, and all uncleanness, accompany (the coloniser) and spread far and wide ... we come, we civilize, and we corrupt or exterminate." (p107)

Furthermore, he takes an ironic look at the fact of being English. "Being Englishmen, an evident necessity existed for us to climb the mountain, and this national duty we determined to perform in comfort and at leisure." (p153)

Boyle is a master of understatement. "It must be admitted that the possibility of encountering a murderous maniac at any moment imparts to the bazaars of Sarawak an element of excitement of which they are naturally destitute." (p20) "There are several streams and ravines...it will readily be believed that to walk over the rocky bed of a dry river upon a round log forty feet long, and unprovided with any possible balance or support, was not altogether the kind of exercise to be preferred by any one not a professional dancer on the tight rope." (p41)

Nor is Boyle inclined to make too much fuss about head-hunting. He puts it in perspective, comparing the medals gained by European soldiers to the skull of an enemy "loyally slain".

As we might expect, when confronted by cockroaches ("at night the cabin was walled, and floored, and ceilinged with them"), perspiration dripping from his clothing, insects upon his face, leeches up his trousers, Boyle exhibits only mild exasperation.

Later writers show similar *sang froid* in the face of adversity but less detachment in social situations. He finds local dances "striking and barbarous", leaves celebrations early and does not ogle the local women. Unlike many who followed him, he takes a very distanced and amused view of the dancing staged largely for his benefit, though one can imagine that his hosts were more relieved than disappointed when he retired early.

Boyle recounts all this in the pleasant cadences of well-tuned English. "The church at Kuching was apparently built in a prophetic spirit, for it is a world too wide for its present congregation; but if the kind persons who subscribed to raise it could be transported from England, on a quiet Sunday afternoon, to see the result of their generosity, I think they would feel little inclined for regret." (p12) His prose has the measured self-congratulatory quality frequently found in the accounts of the traveller-writers.

Few writers encountering Borneo can resist some lyrical writing, usually when confronted by the experience of the landscape. In this, they show a similarity to the contemporary holiday-maker who is rarely able to resist taking a photograph of picturesque or affecting scenery.

Boyle is no exception. "A chain of lofty mountains far inland hung like blue clouds along the horizon; as we approached the shore, a broad sandy beach was discerned dividing the blue

waves from the dark forest; and along the coast were scattered vast masses of rock still encircled by the fleecy mists of dawn. These lofty islets were mostly uninhabited, but the rich vegetation of the tropics had clothed them from base to summit with a mass of soft foliage, and no spot in the world could present a picture more sunny and brilliant than one of these green hills surrounded by its circle of white surf." (p3)

In many ways, then, Boyle resembles our model; an interesting and amusing character but as an explorer, something of a lightweight.

Alfred Russel Wallace: *The Malay Archipelago*

Wallace is no lightweight but he adds comparatively little to our understanding of what it was like to travel through Borneo. A naturalist with much in common with Darwin, to whom he dedicates his book, Wallace is a collector and classifier in the classic Victorian mode. However, only three of his forty chapters on the Archipelago are devoted to Borneo, and within these, there is relatively little that is travel writing. The majority concerns flora and fauna, in particular the orang utan, of which he kills, measures and preserves a large number.

He is entertained by Rajah Brooke and subsequently has a small house built at Simunjon where he stays 9 months collecting and classifying. He devotes little time to descriptions of journeys "This part of the country has been so frequently described that I shall pass it over, especially as ... my collections were comparatively poor and insignificant." (p27)

There is one chapter "Journey to the Interior" where he describes an expedition. "I proposed to go up to the sources of the Sadong river and descend by the Sarawak valley. As the route was somewhat difficult, I took the smallest quantity of baggage, and only one servant." (This is apart from those who paddled his canoe.) There is no real sense of the journey or what it was like to be there. For example, he remarks that "the banks of the river were, however, still generally flooded, and we had some difficulty in finding a dry spot to sleep on" (p50) but of the tribulations of a night in the forest there is nothing. This is not to denigrate Wallace's account, only to point out that his main aim was not the writing of a travel account.

In spite of his views on Dyak music and dance "like most savage performances, very dull and ungraceful affairs" (p53) he is full of praise for the people of the interior. "They were mostly fine young fellows, and I could not help admiring the simplicity and elegance of their costume." (p51) Again, "in moral character they are undoubtedly superior to (the Malays). They are simple and honest, and become the prey of the Chinese traders, who cheat and plunder them continually. They are more lively, more talkative, less secretive, and less suspicious than the Malay." (p68)

Wallace makes little of headhunting or indeed of any other dangers. "I slept very comfortable with half a dozen smoke-dried human skulls suspended over my head," he remarks in passing. (p53)

Wallace's views on the subject of colonialism are interesting in their reservation. Following a discussion of the benefits that advancing civilization may bring to the Dyaks, he asks "Will the happiness of the people as a whole be increased or diminished? Will not evil passions be aroused by the spirit of competition, and crimes and vices, now unknown or dormant, be called into active existence? ... it is to be hoped that ... we may at length be able to point to one instance of an uncivilized people who have not become demoralized and finally exterminated, by contact with European civilization." (p71)

In all, then, we have in Wallace an explorer much like St. John and close to the model in every aspect. As a travel writer about Borneo, however, he has a minor role to play compared with the other personalities reviewed in this and subsequent chapters.

Odoardo Beccari: *Wanderings in the Great Forests of Borneo*

Odoardo Beccari is of the same generation as Spenser St John and Frederick Boyle. His travels, though published in 1902, were undertaken between 1865 and 1877, with the majority of "Wanderings in the Great Forests of Borneo" being concerned with his journeys of 1865-8.

Beccari is one of the earliest explorers of the Bornean interior and forms a useful comparison to writers such as Hose and St John. He reveals similar traits in his motives for travelling. He is of that band of nineteenth century gentleman-scholars who revelled in accumulating knowledge and, in particular, in collecting and classifying. Primarily a botanist, he collected anything living - with the result that many of the creatures he encountered ended up stuffed. A large part of the book comprises little more than an account of observations and collections, sightings and shootings, followed by cataloguing and curing.

Whereas St John records details about anything he sees, Beccari's interests are almost entirely those of the naturalist, and particularly the botanist. The result of Beccari's great knowledge and love of his subject is a book which is on the borderline of travel writing in that it is four fifths botanical or zoological description - often of the minutest detail - and one fifth narrative.

One example will suffice: "It hardly required any botanical experience to recognize a few palms in the multiform vegetable crowd surrounding me. Of these, some had fan-like leaves (licuala), and others showed elegant pinuated fronds, springing from a long and slender trunk (pinanga). But few gaudy flowers indeed were to be seen; only here and there a solitary *Ixora* ventured to colour with its deep red blossoms the pervading dark green of the forest. The big aroides, *Freycinetias*, and *Pandani* with long, hanging leaves, together with ferns, orchids and hosts of epiphytes...." (p7)

Indeed Beccari's knowledge is sometimes a barrier to communication. Few laymen would be able to make much of this, for example, "On the trunks and branches recently cut down, one was pretty sure of making large captures of

coleoptera of the longicorn and Curculio families; and on the damp, rotten surface of trees which had been long dead, mucilaginous planarians glided along." (p9)

Within the one fifth of the book which does not concern flora and fauna, there is little personal detail. And even the personal is somewhat formal: "His (the Rt Rev F T MacDougall, Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak) hospitable house was ever open to us, and we often were his welcome guests. And, as I write, a feeling of gratitude for the memory of our friendship arises in my heart." (p40)

The restraint with which he describes the unpalatable makes a striking contrast with a number of other later writers: "But the favourite condiment was a horrible paste made by mixing well-rotted minced pork and squashed durian pulp. I need not describe the appalling exhalations of that paste, the greatest delicacy of the Land-Dyaks! From noon till dusk the gongs and drums beat unceasingly, and eating went on. All who came were welcome guests, and invited to partake of the food abundantly supplied." (p129)

On the other hand, this restraint can become irksome. So brief a summary of such a feast is frustrating. It is as if Beccari does not really notice himself what is going on around him - he sees social interaction as a waste of time. Time when he could be studying the vegetation which is more of an obsession than an interest.

"Wishing to utilize my time, I got the Dyaks to bring me samples of all the species of fruit which they cultivated around the village." The lack of the personal, the weight of the botanical and the neutrality of the narrative do not make Beccari the most rivetting of reading matter. It would seem strange to him, no doubt, to learn that the reader, even the naturalist, would sometimes like to learn less of *Beccarina xiphostachya* and more of *homo Beccari*.

In his attitudes, Beccari is at least as tolerant and broad-minded as his contemporaries, perhaps more so.

"Our vaunted civilization, the cumulative product of centuries of ignorant prejudices and foolish customs, finds insurmountable difficulties where they would not exist, if, in lieu of moral convention, the simple laws of nature and hygiene were but followed." (p50)

He does not presume that Western religion is the *sine qua non* of civilization or decency: "A certain number of Dyaks have been converted to Christianity by the missionaries, but perhaps a still larger number are becoming assimilated by the Malays, adopting the Mohammedan religion, which, when free from fanaticism, as it usually is when practised by Malays, is perhaps more consonant with the manners and customs of the tropical portion of the far East, and with the climate of those countries." (p377)

His feelings about the Chinese community are similar to those of many travellers in the area: "They are beyond doubt the most active, industrious, laborious and enterprising element in the population of Sarawak; and, foremost in the inveterate vice of opium smoking, cause more money to circulate than the more sober Malay." The vigorous circulation of money, like that of the blood, is felt to be a good thing, regardless of its connections with opium.

His views on the Dyaks and Punan are more friendly and well-disposed than many of his contemporaries and those who followed him into the Great Forests years later. "The honesty, and I may add the genuine goodness, of the Land-Dyaks is remarkable, and they are at the same time noted for their ingenuousness and simplicity." (p61) "The Ukits or Penans...are savages in the true sense of the word, but they are neither degraded nor inferior races."

Nor does Beccari overdramatize the issue of head-hunting. "The custom must be looked upon as neither an expression of savage brutality, nor as a sort of collector's mania for accumulating the proofs of acts of bravery, as a sportsman keeps the trophies of the big game he has killed." (p50) He is rarely sensational and these introductory lines are not typical of his general tone:

"In Borneo, the largest island of Malaysia (sic), an English Rajah and an English Raneé rule with pure autocracy a state which in area equals England and Wales, and has its fleet and its army, yet is without telegraphic communication with the rest of the world; possesses not only no railroads, but no roads, and is clothed by dense and interminable forests in which wanders the orang utan. Here the natives live a primitive life, are in part still mere savages, true man-hunters, who delight in hanging in their houses the smoked skulls of their human

victims, as a homage to imaginary supernatural spirits and as a proof of their bravery."

Beccari's neutral tone is reflected in his style, often using the impersonal "one" instead of the first person. "For a few hundred yards the path was good and dry but if one wandered from it one was often brought up short by the sharp hooked thorns of the rotangs (Calamus)..." (p8)

To a late Twentieth century reader, many of his sentences can seem deliberately long-winded. "Being unprovided with matches it was only with the greatest difficulty that I managed to relight it..." or "I was desirous of ascertaining how nearly these seeds approximated to the weight they were supposed to represent..."

Nor does he become much more involved or excited when describing the leeches which plagued every traveller - there are substantial zoological details, his own reactions being limited to describing the creatures as "excessively troublesome" "...gorge themselves with blood before one is aware of their unwelcome presence." (p10)

He is at his most fulsome when describing the forest. "Infinite and ever changing are its aspects, as are the treasures it hides. Its beauties are as inexhaustible as the variety of its productions. In the forest, man feels singularly free. The more one wanders in it the greater grows the sense of profound admiration before Nature in one of its grandest aspects. The more one endeavours to study it, the more one finds in it to study. Its deep shades are sacred to the devotee of Science. Yet they offer ample food for the mind of the believer, not less than to that of the philosopher." (p15) And later, "Who will ever be able to form an adequate conception of the amount of organic labour silently performed in the depths of the forest...? Who can even in imagination realise the untold myriads of living, palpitating fells that are struggling for existence in the tranquil gloom of a primeval tropical forest? ... What numberless obscure vital phenomena run their course, motionless and in silence, under the shadow of these ancient trees, and to what an infinity of microscopic beings does not the death of one of these giants give birth? How can one picture the vast hosts of these creatures peopling the soil and air, the roots, trunks, flowers, and fruits, and realise their metamorphoses, their habits, and the relations in which they stand towards the plants amongst which, or on which, they

live? In short, how can we ever come to know the biology of this vast living world, which even the profoundest philosopher fails to grasp as a whole?" (p73-74)

The assumption which Beccari makes is typical of the Victorian collector-classifier, that even if the task seems enormous, one must collect everything, classify all things, understand the universe. Perhaps it is still so. Even so, there is something single-minded and almost evangelical ("a secular, global labor" Mary Pratt calls it, setting it alongside the "global labor of religious conversion" (p27)) about this pursuit of knowledge so that discovering and classifying a new fern becomes something of a moral victory.

There is little humour in Beccari's writing. Even the laconic wit found quite frequently in other nineteenth and early twentieth century gentleman writers is absent. This is the closest one gets to a smile when reading of Beccari's wanderings, unless it is to smile at the seriousness with which he takes himself: "Not infrequently a Dyak starts on a head-hunting expedition by himself, as a relaxation or to wear off the effects of a domestic squabble, just as with us a man might go out rabbit shooting to get over an attack of ill-humour."

Beccari matches our model in so many respects that it is easier to point out those few aspects where he departs from it. He lacks companions of his own status for much of the time - but only because of the enforced departure of his companion, Giacomo Doria, through illness. In terms of style, Beccari lacks the urbanity we have noted in others and there are fewer anecdotes than in most explorers' accounts. It is in his attitudes that Beccari is perhaps most interestingly at odds with the model in that he reveals very few prejudices about racial types or women - and his attitude to the native population generally is not adequately described as benign paternalism. He appears to accept the Punan, Dyak, or Malay for what they are - and to give his real attention to *Nepenthes*, *Palaquium* or Orang Utan.

Some of the omissions in Beccari's book are unusual. There is at most only a very fleeting mention of those staples of later travellers: longhouses, arak and dancing. Perhaps his mind was on loftier things, or he thought them irrelevant to his record. Given that the subject of his attention was Nature not Man or Culture, and the seriousness of purpose which he brought to the work, that such items should be largely ignored is hardly surprising.

Carl Bock: *The Headhunters of Borneo - a narrative of travel up the Mahakkam and down the Barito*

Carl Bock was a Norwegian explorer who led an official expedition on behalf of the Dutch government. His title leaves us in no doubt about how we are expected to perceive the text: it is a narrative about travel and should fit our criteria precisely! The part of the title which has drawn most attention, however, is the reference to Headhunters. Bock's book is not the last to include the term in the title in order to attract readers - and he has been criticized for it, partly because of the sensationalism and partly because he added little to what was already known about the head-hunting practices of the Dayak.

The writer of the Introduction, R.H.W. Reece, characterizes Bock as "ever in search of the sensational..." and yet the book is hardly full of purple prose. Indeed, the style is calm to the point of being bland much of the time. "One noticeable feature in all these gatherings is that no drinking of intoxicating liquors takes place. Neither Dyak nor Malay is ever seen to touch alcoholic drinks. Hence they do not artificially stimulate the excitement which naturally supervenes on high play, and quarrels are seldom if ever witnessed. Not even high words are exchanged. They play till their last cent is lost, and then either quietly retire, or watch the luck of others." (p43)

Bock does not write sensationally about even the "cannibal" he interviews. The greatest excess he allows himself is as follows: "His personal appearance bore out the idea I had formed of him by the reports I had heard of his ferocity and the depravity of his nature; but I was hardly prepared to see such an utter incarnation of all that is most repulsive and horrible in the human form" (p134) Nor, to take a more trivial but equally revealing example, does the durian fruit, widely considered repulsive by Western observers, occasion much excitement. "... the smell of the fruit was not very appetizing, and the flavour - to my taste - resembled that of bad onions mixed with cream." (p143)

The unexceptional nature of the writing here and there gives way to a gentle lyricism. "Grouped round the blazing fires, some busily attending to the preparations for supper, others as busily occupied in smoking, others again already seeking in sleep the necessary rest for the duties of the morrow, my little

company of half-tamed savages presented a picturesque appearance in this fitful light, and, having made arrangements for a proper watch to be kept, I wrapped myself closely in my rug and fell asleep, tired and hungry, watching their movements, and wondering how many miles behind were my lagging companions and my tinned provisions." (p150) And sometimes something with a shade more feeling: "The pitter patter of the rain, bringing down numberless leaves during a sudden shower, produces an entirely novel impression on the ear; and a tropical thunderstorm at night in a forest, when the rain falls as if it would sweep every tree bare of its foliage: when each flash of lightning seems to single out a forest giant on which to expend its force, and to set the whole forest ablaze: when the deafening reverberations of the thunderclap roll through and through the mighty aisles of nature's own many-columned cathedral - such a scene is beyond the power of pen to describe or pencil to picture." (p159)

For the most part, however, Bock's feelings are not apparent. The many discomforts and privations are alluded to briefly before we pass on to more general matters. Rarely does he permit himself to sermonize thus: "A glance at the deck of the 'Riouw' and the thoughts which the villainous gang and their victims huddled together there conjured up, contrasted strangely with the beauty of the natural scenery of which the vessel was the centre, and showed how the fair face of Nature was marred and blurred by the hideousness of the deeds of darkness performed by the miserable off-scourings of humanity, to whom the light of civilization and Christianity had not yet penetrated." (p96)

As with the style, so with the content. Head-hunting and cannibalism constitute a minute proportion of the book, most of which is taken up with the mundane day to day descriptions of the expedition and the author's observations. These are carefully recorded but without the extensive detail which some of Bock's contemporaries and successors recorded (Tillema, for example). The more academic remarks are collected into a few chapters at the end of the account and even these are superficial by the standard of someone like Wallace or Beccari. Where he does let himself be led astray, are the occasions where he is tempted to follow up stories of a race of men with tails. However, he remains sceptical and later in the book is honest enough to relate the likely origin of the myth, together with a ludicrous incident which shows him in a foolish light.

Bock has decided opinions on various races, which are apparent from early on. The Bugis "are a treacherous race" (p22) and all Malays "are lazy" (p48). Further, "It is curious fact that the Oriental nature is not compatible with financial progress, or good government generally. ... As it is with Turkey, so it is more or less with all Oriental - certainly with all Mohammedan - states." (p38)

Bock accepts the notions of civilization then current in which civilization is largely equated with sophistication. "It must not be forgotten ... that his subjects are still in a low state of civilization, and it will be a work of time to raise them in the scale of humanity. " (p38)

Bock is not the only traveller to find difficulty in placing the Dyaks in a neat category. They seem to be archetypically savage - and yet they behave like gentlemen! The following sums up this dilemma. "As regards morality, I am bound to give the Dyaks a high place in the scale of civilization. The question may be put, how can morality be attributed to a head-hunter?" (p209)

For all his prejudices and his low opinion of many of the settlements and much of the population, Bock communicates a sense of tolerance and good nature. He is certainly able to get on with all the people, high and low, that he encountered and we are not surprised to learn that he ended up as a diplomat.

Like other representatives of the colonial powers, Bock could not help looking at the country through Western economic eyes. "The country is, however, undoubtedly rich, and if the trade were protected by a regular administration, and some greater semblance to law and order, there is no doubt that a larger number of Europeans, and of Chinese especially, would be attracted to it, and develop its resources. The soil is everywhere fertile, the natural productions are abundant, and all that is wanted is greater honesty among the people, from the highest to the lowest, for the land to be able to support ten times its present population. (p26) Or, "... the country is rich and fertile, and could support a large agricultural and manufacturing population." (p46)

Bock is much like St John, Beccari and others. He is in charge, has considerable official support (both from local rulers like the Sultan of Kotei as well as the Dutch government) and commands a considerable entourage. He collects samples and is

fairly knowledgeable - though less so than the two writers just mentioned. He has firm opinions and is utterly confident. The writing is certainly impersonal in character and though good-humoured, lacks humour. In style, Bock is perhaps less urbane than many others and certainly without the dry wit. Given that he is writing in a second language, this is perhaps not surprising. Overall, he is very much like our model explorer, with only minor variations.

Alfred C Haddon: *Headhunters Black, White and Brown.*

Haddon heads an expedition for the purpose of collecting anthropological material in the islands of the Torres Straits. The visit to Sarawak is something of an afterthought which is due to "a cordial invitation by Dr Charles Hose, the Resident of the Baram District". His original interest in the Torres Straits was initially coral reefs and marine zoology whereas his attention in this book is largely directed towards human behaviour and artefacts.

Like his predecessors he is a great collector, but of artefacts rather than animals. Much of the time he travels with Hose, which assures a degree of official support even greater than usual. In these travels up river and up mountains, he demonstrates considerable skill as a describer of ceremonies, customs and the like, but little as a narrator of the journey. There is little sense of what it was like to be there - and none at all of what it was like to be Alfred Haddon being there.

For example, on the expedition up Mount Dulit Haddon is forced to stay at camp some way down from the peak while the others go on to the summit because he did not feel well "and was not equal to the climb" but more than that we are not told. The personal is not so much hidden as considered irrelevant.

Later he reports, "Unfortunately this trip which promised to be so interesting was marred for me by a bout of fever and so I could not fully avail myself of the opportunities it afforded of studying this important and well-organized tribe of the Kenyahs." (p206)

The cool, removed style rarely changes. "Drinks then became general, and there was much noise and enjoyment. ... Everything was very human, and, alas! the after results were in a few cases very "human" too." (p187) This is as conversational as Haddon allows himself to become.

Most of the travel chapters contain asides of generalisation, for example, in the middle of the description of the trip up Mount Dulit he begins a lengthy description of fauna. "About a hundred and forty species of mammals have been discovered in Borneo..." (p181) This, rather than, "I was delighted to catch

sight of an unusual long-nosed monkey..." is typical of Haddon's style.

He is equally calm and uninvolved in his sections about headhunting. In spite of the title (perhaps the publishers' idea), this is one of the least sensational treatments of headhunting. In reporting the "cult of skulls" he remarks, "there can be little doubt that one of the chief incentives to procure heads was to please the women ... This is, at all events, one sufficiently rational reason for the custom..." (p213) There is no reference to savagery, the bizarre or the terrible.

Moreover, Haddon writes in a remarkably detached way about colonialism. "There would be a grave danger to the natives if Sarawak was "opened up" according to the desires of certain financiers or corporations whose sole idea is to make money. The "development" of a country does not necessarily mean the welfare of the original inhabitants; too often it spells their ruin or extermination. The hustling white man wants to make as much money as he can within the shortest possible time; but rapid exploitation is not development. ... According to one point of view, a country belongs to its inhabitants; but according to another, which is prevalent among Europeans, it should belong to those who can extract the most from it." (p144)

This is said in spite of an underlying belief in the superiority of not just Western but Anglo-Saxon culture. "Then appeared on the scene the Anglo-Saxon overlord. The quality of firmness combined with justice made itself felt. At times the lower social types hurled themselves, but in vain, against the instrument that had been forged and tempered in a similar turmoil of Iberian, Celt, Roman, Teuton, and Viking in Northern Europe. Now they acknowledge that safety of life and property and almost complete liberty are fully worth the very small price they have to pay for them." (p162)

Haddon is respectful towards and deeply interested in the indigenous cultures but, while not given to racial stereotyping as such, seems to see people in hierarchical order. "The (Kalabit) social organization is correspondingly higher than among the Punans ... The Kenyahs and Kayans are the highest in social evolution." (p158) This, together with his practice of measuring individuals' skulls and calculating their "cephalic index" has echoes of racial theories which were to develop tragically in the 1930s. The tone of Haddon, however, is far

from racist. The somewhat patronising tone which is evident from time to time has more in common with class than race - as the following extract shows.

"The young ladies of Tama Bulan's house proved to be the friendliest and jolliest damsels I have met in all my travels. They were not shy, but sat with us after the meal and made themselves agreeable. I quite envied Hose his facility of chatting to them, but the girls tried to make me feel at home by pulling my fingers to make them crack - this appears to be a sort of delicate attention to pay to a friend. I could not help comparing the behaviour of these girls with that of a merry party of frank, wholesome girls in an English country house. The non-essentials were as different as possible - features, dress, ornaments, and habits - but there was the same *camaraderie* and good breeding." (p207)

As we have seen, Haddon enjoys the backing of the government and is able to tour the country almost with ease - though this is not to detract from the arduous nature of some of the journeys. He is knowledgeable about the country and has companions of similar status. The expeditions are well equipped without being as substantial as many others, such as those of Tillema or Bock.

Haddon has firm opinions and believes that he is serving mankind through the increase of human knowledge. His attitude to the native population is benign but superior. His style is the epitome of the balanced and urbane, particularly notable for its understatement and modesty. Haddon, however, lacks the wit we find elsewhere and is even more impersonal than most of the explorers. This characteristic is emphasized by the relative paucity of anecdote and the preponderance of careful, almost text-book, description. In all, though, he is much like our model.

Karl Lumholtz: *Through Central Borneo*

Lumholtz shows remarkable similarities to many of the other tramps with an excuse, (see Enriquez below, for example), his Norwegian nationality being of little significance, save in some aspects of the style of the writing.

He too has official backing (from the RGS and, amongst others, the Dutch and Norwegian authorities). Furthermore, he seems to have local officials eating out of his hand: "The controleur courteously provided for my use the government's steamship *Sophia*" and leads a considerable little party including photographer (Ah Sewey), museum worker, interpreter (who spoke no Dutch or English), local official and many unnamed Dyaks; at one point he brings "29 coolies from Puruk Tjahu to serve as paddlers."

He is knowledgeable about flora, fauna, ethnography and local customs. He has done his homework, read other travellers' accounts, and begins in a very thorough manner by placing the expedition in a historical and geographical context. Once again the interest in fauna does not stop it being killed, "Chonggat succeeded in killing an exceedingly rare squirrel". There is much detail on a huge variety of subjects, leeches, prahu, songs of the Kayan (with musical notation), dialects, diet...

In his attitude to the native population he is similar to a number of other explorers, if perhaps a little less judgemental. He praises the Dyaks ("such able and willing men") and Kayans. "I found the Kayans very agreeable to deal with, and later had the same experience with many other tribes of Borneo" but, in the same way that Boyle took against Chinese and Enriquez was to dislike Indians, dislikes Malays, especially Muslim Malays whose culture he sees as undermining and replacing that of the indigenous population.

"The natives have been too susceptible to the demoralizing Malay influence which has overcome their natural scruples about stealing". (p144) "The Malays establish sultanates with the same kind of government that is habitual with Mohammedans, based on oppression of the natives by the levying of tribute with the complement of strife, intrigue and non-progress." However, in one settlement, he comments "The peace and contentment among the natives here, mostly Malays,

impresses one favourably. They are all very fond of their children and take good care of them. ...it is gratifying to state that during the (two years) I never saw a native drunk..."

The style of Lumholtz's writing is more "straightforward" than that of a writer like St. John. He lacks the urbane and euphonious phrasing of the latter, perhaps because he is writing in a second language. His style is unembellished: "At the end of the gallery stood the large, newly made casket, which was open, the corpse covered with cloth resting inside. It was an oblong, heavy box supposed to represent a rhinoceros, though nothing positively indicated this except the large head of this animal at one end, which, though rudely made, was cut with considerable artistic skill. The family sat around the casket, one man smoking tobacco, the woman wailing and occasionally lifting the cover to look at the face of the corpse." (p79) The second sentence of the above extract is one of the longest and most complex that Lumholtz uses.

He does exhibit some of the English gentleman's style from time to time: "During rain it is conducive to a sense of comfort and security..." and "It may readily be understood how much I enjoyed a glass of cool Margaux-Meduc with dinner after 5 months in the utan." (p94) It is as much the *it may readily be understood* as the reference to Margaux-Meduc which signals the well-bred gentleman.

This quality is brought out again in his recollections of encounters with danger. "I had a curious adventure with a snake" (in fact a cobra 25 cm away) "... our proximity was too close to be entirely agreeable." (p134) One can imagine what some other writers would have made of this scene.

The *sang froid* is demonstrated again and again: "Upon looking about, I discovered to my astonishment that the floor, which had a covering of closely set bamboo stalks, was black with ants and that regiments of them were busily climbing up my bed. Coming in such immense numbers and unannounced their appearance was startling. Outside the soil seemed to move." (p90) This last sentence is probably the most excited Lumholtz allows himself to become. Restraint and understatement are, as with so many others, the hallmark: "it was not altogether a pleasant 2 days journey" or "the stagnant atmosphere and dark environment which the sun's rays vainly attempted to penetrate, began to have a depressing effect on my spirits." Rarely, though, do we get any deeper glimpses into

the writer's feelings or, even, his activities. The closest we get is to learn of his 2 kettles and 5 gallon tin bath tub...

There are few lyrical passages, very little humour and hardly any anecdotes. Though like most travel writing, side tracks are followed frequently, usually to digress on local customs, the writing certainly does comprise a narrative - the story of the explorer's lengthy journeys up and down the rivers of central and southern Borneo. In every other particular, Lumholtz resembles our model. Certain stylistic differences notwithstanding, his account could be that of a mid-Victorian gentleman.

W.F.Alder: *Men of the Inner Jungle*

The purpose of Alder's journey into the "Inner Jungle" is not immediately clear. The narrative is sufficiently unlike that of the writers so far considered as to raise the question of whether Alder is an explorer at all. It is not until we reach page 85 that we find the statement, "inasmuch as we have come to study the natives..." This is the first indication of any academic motive and one suspects that Alder thinks that anthropology consists of any white man visiting "unexplored" territory, looking at the "natives" and writing about his adventures afterwards. The dedication at the beginning of the book refers to what follows as a "narrative of a ramble with the genial headhunters."

On page 85 we come across the following: "There is a room down below, however, he says, that may be to our liking, and inasmuch as we have come to study the natives we may like it better..." Studying the natives is an excuse we will hear again from other travellers... Alder gives little substantiation for his claim to be studying the natives either in his academic background, the activities he undertakes or the descriptions of life which he offers. The reader might be forgiven for thinking that Alder was more interested in crocodile shooting than anthropology. Duration, distance and destination are similarly imprecise.

What does this ramble have in common with the explorations we have already examined?

Alder has companions (he frequently uses "we" without any clarification of the number or nature of the persons referred to) of his own status and various servants and porters, most of which are hired temporarily apart from a much abused cook called Sam, who is treated sarcastically and thoughtlessly. Though lacking official government backing he seems to have every local official at his beck and call, proffering the use of government steam boats and servants.

This having been said, Alder lacks any real knowledge of the country or the people. He appears to have done no research nor to have any systematic approach to what he observes. In this respect he differs markedly from other writers.

His attitude to the indigenous population is typically mixed. It consists of an admiration which is at odds with his ingrained feelings of superiority. This informs statements based on observations of, say, cock-fighting, leading him to deduce that Dyaks are violent by nature. He lacks the breadth and balance which would include reference to fox-hunting or bull-fighting in his thinking. Passing thoughts become ponderous statements. "We shall find the warriors to be grown up children when at play, savages when performing religious orgies, fiendishly brutal when engaged in warfare, yet we shall leave them regretfully, for their good qualities are legion." Throughout the book there is a sense of barbarism only just restrained by the hand of civilization. Whilst this attitude is not untypical of many of the early writer explorers, it is more robustly expressed by Alder - possibly because of his American origins.

Alder's style of writing is related to the laconic, urbane mode we have already noted, but is less smug, less well-phrased and more that of the down-to-earth man-of-the-world.

"On our way back to our "club room" we observe that girls will be girls the world over, for, seated upon the steps of their home, we see three Malay damsels who try to establish cordial relations, archly flirting with outrageous disregard of convention. But it is ever thus." (p98)

He has the gentleman's apparent disdain for physical discomfort which manifests itself in sentences such as these describing the attacks of leeches: "Upon investigation we find that the ubiquitous little devils have sought out the openings in our puttees and have been lunching at our expense... The glowing tip of a cigarette applied to his leechship makes him lose interest in his dinner..." (p148)

Alder's tone is laid back and neutral. The word which comes to mind when listening to his writing is *ordinary*, or perhaps *shallow*. It is related to the familiar laconic British voice but is rather less euphonious. His style is colloquial, with plentiful use of slang terms such as "Little shavers" or "tikes" for children (native ones of course).

For all his no-nonsense narration, he is not averse to purple passages: "Morning stealing out of velvet night ghost-sheeted with gray translucent vapours - noon smiting the jungle roof with blazing swelter - night creeping on one with deepening

shadows in which the will o' the wisps dance eerily like spectral banshees of a nether world."

"The Leong winds like a silver pathway in the dusk to highlands behind which the moon is beginning to illumine the purple depths of the sky with an argent promise of its coming fullness." (p104)

How far, then, does Alder match our idea of the true explorer? On the one hand he isn't knowledgeable about the country, doesn't collect samples of flora and fauna, doesn't appear to have the backing of either government or learned society.

On the other hand, he has companions of his own status and employs numerous porters cum paddlers and does seem to have some influence with government officials. His opinions and his attitude to the native population and women are those we associate with our model. His style of writing is balanced and understated though it is not as urbane or witty as some. Like most others, though, the tone of his writing reveals a complete confidence in the rightness of his actions and beliefs which is characteristic of Westerners writing about the rest of the world. And, though it is a "narrative of a ramble", it remains impersonal in its details and the access it offers to thoughts or feelings.

Do we discover that the quality of his writing makes up for a lack of other qualities such as academic detail or new findings? While the prose does show some of the characteristics later to be associated with the so-called New Journalism, the writing overall is not inspiring and the account adds little to our knowledge of Borneo or our understanding of the world. All in all, Alder is an example of a tramp with a rather feeble excuse trying to add to a genre of writing in which he can only offer poor imitation. Travel writing seems easy to a gentleman of means - the evidence shows that it is not.

C M Enriquez: *Kinabalu - the Haunted Mountain of Borneo*

One character who comes very close to the model is C M Enriquez (or to give him his full title, Major C M Enriquez FRGS of the 2/22 Burma Rifles). He heads a considerable retinue and is engaged in a systematic survey of all and every living thing as he makes his ascent of Kinabalu. He proceeds in the full knowledge of the backing of government, army, science and God. He is knowledgeable about flora and fauna, especially insects and lepidoptera and much of the writing is in the nature of academic detail. This level of interest and knowledge does not prevent him from wanting to take dead specimens of as much wildlife as possible back with him, shooting "fine black squirrel" and two broadbills ("very beautiful birds") for scientific purposes...

He is also knowledgeable about the indigenous races but prone to snap judgements about them. His writing is a classic of its kind; "The Dusuns themselves never go to the summit of Kinabalu of their own accord, partly because of the cold, partly because of the discomforts of the climb, but more especially because the spirits of their dead reside on those frozen heights, brooding over the green valleys and homely villages far below." (p80) The well modulated phrasing of this sentence is typical of Enriquez' style. His vocabulary is broader than many who preceded and succeeded him: "But Nature, even in the tropics, will not permit a protracted indulgence in abstruse themes at 13,000 feet."

He is restrained except on rare occasions. Head hunting is not sensationalized. It receives a mildly amused tone amongst a general seriousness of approach. The restraint is shown in this example of understatement: "On the whole the building was remarkably clean, though the Murut cannot be accused of sanitation." His calmness is most noticeable in the face of difficulties and dangers - and Enriquez retains the white man's traditional *sang froid* throughout.

For all the restraint and understatement, Enriquez is capable of lyrical, almost purple passages. "The hills are low and often thickly wooded, with frequent glades deeply shaded, and with enchanting streams cascading over rocks to a little sunflecked

area on the road, where innumerable butterflies congregate to intoxicate themselves on the warm moisture..." (p94)

It is perhaps in his attitude to the native population that Enriquez is most typical of many who came before him and some who were to follow. He knows what is best for everyone. Though his solutions might be idiosyncratic - military employment for instance "would do more than anything else to cultivate and civilize the backward races." - it is the supreme confidence which we recognize. Note also his comments on the Company police: "...they are still very ignorant and have not reached the stage of wanting to learn; ...but they enter the Company's police service freely, which is, after all, the best possible school for a people of their situation." (p47)

He loves the "good native" - the book is dedicated to "brave loyal simple hearted Sam Nan", his Burmese servant, for whom he grieves "as a brother".

He has likes and dislikes for certain races. He is anti-Indian but pro-Chinese. "The Chinamen here, as always, is thrifty, honest, diligent and sagacious." (p139) "No one seems to like the Bajau. Living near the coast, he (sic) is more or less civilized, but appears to have derived little moral benefit from that. Nor is it altogether surprising - for blood *will* tell; and the Bajau are simply the descendants of pirates and sea gypsies from Sulu." Or: "The Dusun inhabitants round Kinabalu are extremely simple folk."

He exhibits the paternal face of the imperial army officer - high standards but always willing to give credit where credit is due... Within his lectures on civilization we find interesting moments, however: "Most of them are simple pleasant folk; sometimes ignorant, sometimes dirty, but always cheery, willing and hospitable, having within them the milk of human kindness. Before them, too, is a future, when the country's development shall have raised them above their present ignorance and superstition. One does not ardently desire that these good people should be lifted out of happiness into that state that we fondly call civilization. Hospitals, roads, and perhaps a little elementary education is all they need, and contact with the right type of British Tuan." (p144) For all its racist superiority there is an interesting note here questioning the absolute god of western civilization - a note which has been struck before and which will become stronger with later travellers.

In all but a handful of ways, then, Enriquez is as close to the idea of the true explorer as St.John. Both would probably be well satisfied with that assessment.

Charles Hose: *Fifty Years of Romance and Research*

Hose wrote in the same decade as Enriquez and produced a number of learned articles and books. *Fifty Years of Romance and Research* is the work which comes closest to being travel writing in that much of it is concerned with accounts of journeys, albeit as subsidiary aspects of his long period as Divisional Resident in Sarawak.

As a result of his academic aptitude and the long period spent in the area, Hose is extremely knowledgeable, not just about areas which might impinge on his job such as ethnography and custom, but also on flora and fauna. He was a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and Zoological Society of London - and his book is prefaced by Sir Arthur Keith MD DSc LLD FRS President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, no less. Like previous explorers he is keen to note new species and to shoot them.

He travelled with a considerable party, sometimes a small army, and it must be pointed out that some of his explorations are more in the nature of military expeditions, though that in itself does not perhaps debar a piece of writing from the category of travel writing... Like St. John before him and MacDonald after him, he not only has the backing of government, he *is* the government.

Hose has firm opinions which he shares with the reader from time to time in amiable asides. The progressive nature of his views does not detract from the fact that they are offered in a way which while being urbane is nevertheless not used to being ignored. His words have the confidence typical of a public school public servant, "What, however, I would especially wish to condemn is the habit of treating savages and primitive peoples as if their mental processes were entirely different from ours; whereas what should be most insisted on is points of resemblance." (p246)

Hose makes very few generalizations about race or tribe apart from a few mild nods of approval ("The Ibans are likeable people..." or the Japanese, "that progressive and watchful people") and he remarks of the Iban rebel Abau Jau "A pagan and a savage, he was one of the finest gentlemen I have ever met."

Indeed, in one of his several appendices, he expounds on the topic of Colonial administration. "With native races ... we can only govern by first obeying. After all, it is better to teach them to govern: teach our administrators, let them teach the people they govern and in time these will be able to govern themselves. Is not this the final end and aim of all our Colonial administration? Most of the native customs, however much opposed to our Western ideas of Morality and the Science of Politics, have grown up in a certain environment: it is upon that living stem that we have to graft whatever changes we deem desirable to make." (p269)

Notwithstanding the progressive nature of much of this for its time, one is struck by the presumption and arrogance of phrases such as *whatever changes we deem desirable to make*. This mixture of assumed superiority and perceptive comments on colonialism is a theme we have noted before.

Hose's style is what we might expect - the educated and unadorned prose of a gentleman. "I was agreeably surprised at the favourable nature of the country." Although one can almost see the cucumber sandwiches on the table this very person is the one who will be knee deep in mud and leeches in a few days time - and, again typically, uncomplaining.

"In a tropical country endowed by Nature with such a lavish variety of scenery as Borneo, one naturally expects a profusion of vegetable and animal life. From the dancing waves of the open sea and a flat coast land fringed with mangrove and Nipa palm swamps, the traveller passes inland along one of the numerous rivers, through immense forests or between jungle clad banks to lofty mountains whence descend thousands of rivers and streams. All these waters and lands and forests teem with their appropriate forms of life, selected and adapted by the process of ages to suit themselves to their environment." (p80)

The measured appreciation can develop into something a little more lyrical from time to time: "The roaring of the wind and the crash of falling timber and huge rocks with torrents of rain, such as the tropics alone can show, created a scene of wild portentous tumult that filled the mind with wonder and awe at the overwhelming power and grandeur of the forces of Nature." Most of the time, however, the prose is more sober, whether in

exposition "Of birds there are many varieties great and small..." or narrative "Another incident which, for all its seriousness, was not without its humour, occurred..." Humour as might be inferred from the previous quotation is dry and understated and anecdote is employed sparingly. Incidents involving headhunting and running amok are reported but with the sort of calm tone that might accompany a road accident or robbery in this country.

All in all, Hose is another of the typical tramps - in his case with many excuses.

Tom Harrisson: *Borneo Jungle: an Account of the Oxford Expedition*

With *Borneo Jungle* edited by Tom Harrisson, it is as if, though in the same house, we move into a very different room. The account of the 1932 expedition to Borneo is at the true explorer's end of the spectrum. All the participants are academics, each with their individual specialisms. The voice of the writer is still very English, very confident, but with a changed tone. "Exploration used to mean finding a continent. It has shrunk now to seeing a new mountain and to reaching the top of it. Everest can hardly be called exploring any more and even the Antarctic is rather thin ice. In practice, exploration now means pushing farther into areas already known at least upon the fringes; the entry ... into the Central Plateau of New Guinea makes not only the disclosure of a perfect Lost World of the Stone Age but also and inevitably the last of the Stone Age. Already most places are passing out of the Iron Age into the age of aluminium and bomb. The age of electric hell is here. And this magnificent phase of civilization, of Guernica and Hankow, has been made possible through the research of scientists plus the way in which politicians and socially conscious persons and business men have used the achievements of scientists... You can travel almost anywhere safely now..."

His reflections on exploration (or the presentation of it to an audience) make entertaining reading: "What is really needed is a combination of the two functions - amusing and accurate observations of reliable but readable fact, of ecology and aesthetics. Nothing is more needed today than aesthetic exploration, co-operation of poet and palaeontologist, botanist and balletomaniac, survey photographer and surrealist."

This then is a classic of exploration travel writing - but is not always what one might expect. Learned it is but dry it is not. There is much careful describing of events and finds, the odd Latin name for bird or plant, but never a surfeit of detail - the learning is carried easily.

The youth and high spirits of the college academics manifests itself in humour, strongly held views and, in some places, informal prose. "The famous fat Sarawak Government officer and traveller, Charles Hose..." "Brooke cashed in on Hassim.

Hassim was tickled to death. The Dyaks were beaten. Hassim said to Brooke: "You'd make a swell rajah." That's what Brooke thought. The Sultan of Brunei was not so sure, but fed up with that bit of territory." (p31)

Some of Harrisson and Company's views have already been touched upon above. Their views on "civilization" are stated even more unequivocally elsewhere. "Our civilization has never brought any conspicuous benefits to any "primitive" population..." "Savage - a singular misnomer for the kindly and cultured peoples of Sarawak." Harrisson is strongly pro-native. Of the Penan he says "they are probably equal with or superior to any other people on earth." "...to aim at simplicity and at living in the land, on the land, of the land, native-wise, whether in the jungle or the Arctic or England ... We are not superior to the Borneans, nor indeed to cannibals, cab-drivers or kings. We are different. Each man is different. And not very." This - in its 1930s guise looking forward to the later 20th century - is typical of the travel writer's tendency to pause in his or her tale, to turn to the audience and to deliver a short sermon.

The account, taken as a whole, is less of a narrative than the works of Enriquez or Lumholtz. It is a series of discrete chapters, some discursive like Harrisson's introduction (where he expounds upon exploration and civilization), some narrative and some tending more towards an academic cataloguing of discoveries.

Harrisson's writing does not exhibit lyricism so much as a nervy, excitable quality. "Many sorts of kingfisher glistening blue-velvety and purple plush bluebirds flit to and fro like dumpy butterflies while all kinds of fruit pigeon, fifteen sorts of woodpecker, langur monkeys, parroquets and cigar-necked clumsy darters, illuminate every mile of the journey. Towards the evening the cicadas make your ears tingle with sound, one of them so regularly at six o'clock with its noise like the bray of a donkey in high treble, that absent minded white men are reminded of their race and their time, calling it therefore the Gin and Bitters Bug..." Their race, their time - and their class!

The absence of purple passages does not mean, of course, that the writers lack strong feelings, merely that those feelings are better expressed. "...the tropical rain forest, which is indeed a paradise, but a paradise of greens; there is so much of this colour and so many different shades that the effect is

somewhat unreal. Often I felt that our wanderings in the forest must be only a pleasant dream and that I should wake to find myself in Cambridge, slumbering over the fire." (p156) So writes Synge, one of Harrisson's companions, who contributes the chapter on "Beauty in Borneo". Even in the most effusive passages there is a measured appreciation: "It was indeed an enchanting place, although there always seemed something mysterious and uncanny lurking among the fantastic shapes of the trees and moss, and it does not seem strange that many of the Borneo people regard the mountain tops as the home of the spirits of the dead." (Synge p168)

There is in this account far more reference to the leisure activities of the explorers than in Enriquez and Lumholtz. "The toper who boasts of his capacity for alcohol is generally an exasperating person. But with the drinker of borak there is this excuse: that though it may sometimes be a very pleasant drink, it is, very often, utterly foul... (p67)"

"When the cup has approached about 18" from your mouth you grasp it with grim determination and, without allowing your grip to relax, you drink a little to satisfy etiquette; then having with your free hand obtained a grasp on the lady's neck - she has already got hold of yours - you begin to force the cup towards her. She protests. ... You insist. Eventually she yields and your little battle is over." (p72)

"Young and old they are charming and were one's tastes sufficiently catholic to accept broad noses, high cheek bones, slanting eyes and often the roundest of faces, one might find them beautiful. But...they possessed even the plainest of them a grace which is lost to women of civilized nations." (p68) The references to wine women and song will increase as we approach closer to our own time...

Where does Harrisson stand in relation to our model? In the case of his knowledge, backing, baggage, companions and retinue, the model is accurate. He has decided opinions, as we have seen above, different though they might be to those of a previous generation. However, his style of writing is not quite so balanced and urbane - tending in places to be more colloquial in tone and more personal in content. Nevertheless, he remains modest and much of his writing is characterised by wit and understatement. Furthermore, underlying the criticisms of western values lies a confidence bred by those values.

H F Tillema: *A Journey among the peoples of central Borneo in word and picture*

Tillema was an explorer with a camera - or rather a number of cameras, both still and moving. Experienced in the ways of the East from a long sojourn in Java and several expeditions, he returned in 1931 to make a journey into the Apo Kayan region.

Victor King introduces the 1989 edition and remarks, "Despite the travelogue quality of much of Tillema's narrative, I am impressed by his generally sympathetic portrayal and evaluation of Dayak life and culture. Certainly Tillema could be paternalistic, conscious of the civilizing mission of the Dutch; but he was also very aware of the need to understand Dayak ways of life in their own terms. In striking contrast to the sensationalism and extravagance of many popular travel books on Borneo, Tillema's book demonstrates that he was a serious scholar with a commitment to the study of native cultures. His genuine interest is also supported by the fact that he financed his trips out of his own pocket... " (p20)

The quality of maps and photographs in Tillema's book puts most other accounts to shame. We would expect his photos to be of good quality both technically and in terms of content - that is after all what he set out to do - but many other expeditions make great play with the photographic side of their journey with results which are often disappointing. Tillema sets a standard by which to measure all the others.

Tillema makes much of the remoteness of the Apo Kayan where he was determined to visit in order to record "vanishing customs". It may be that the area was not quite as remote as Tillema wanted it to appear, but in general he is notable for avoiding sensation or extravagance.

His mentions of head-hunting are never made in the tone of one who wishes to impress the reader with his bravery. They are always measured, even when somewhat controversial: "I do not in any way wish to justify the custom, but I must say that it was in no way founded on cruelty or lust of blood, and it seems to me regrettable that when this custom, which was to a certain extent based upon ethical conceptions, was abolished,

we did not attempt to replace it by some other conception of spiritual value." (p20)

His lack of sensationalism is reflected in this passage also: "Very rarely a snake even falls into the boat. The occupants are alarmed as a result. But it has never happened to me on all my numerous journeys on the rivers. I have read of it, but such stories can be put down to explorers who want to surround themselves with an aura of bravura to make their travellers tales more interesting. " (p64)

Tillema, then, has much in common with explorers such as Harrison. While he expresses the need for the spreading of Dutch civilization his writing reveals very little superiority. Indeed in several passages he stresses similarities between primitive and civilized peoples. "Among primitive people *adat*, established custom, tradition, is quite enough to rule behaviour. But are we educated civilized Europeans really very different?" "...no less was the merriment of the others at the punishment which had attended their greed. Yes, "savages" are just like us!" (p119) He certainly found much to like and admire amongst the Dayak and the Punan. At the end of his account he uses "likeable" "amiable" and "good-natured" to refer to the peoples of the interior.

He also has much in common with St John, despite the years separating them. Curiosity is the motive for much of Tillema's travel, together with the feeling of adding to human knowledge and opening up savagery to civilization. Tillema's philanthropic motives are made specific in one of his conclusions:

"With that I come to the end of my reports and observations as a concerned Dutchman who travelled as the first tourist with camera and film camera in that unknown land. I express the hope that they may stimulate the interest in the existence of a people, that it really deserves.

That interest will lead to action:

- 1 Immediate introduction of civilian administration.
- 2 Posting of physicians with insight and training in hygiene, able to tackle malaria etc. with very little expenditure. (A start has already been made.)
- 3 The introduction of higher civilization through the Mission.
- 4 Cordial co-operation between the three bodies." (p146)

Again, like St John, there is little of the very personal. It may be a personal account of a journey but it remains largely about outward scenes and events, not the internal thoughts and

feelings of the traveller. This passage is about as expressive as Tillema allows himself to be with regard to his own feelings:

"I found it pleasant to stay in the fixed camp, for sitting on such a hard bench in a rolling boat, with the continual driving to hurry up, the stumbling about over the hot, sharp rocks along the many *kiham*, the camps in the forest (with the nasty agas and leeches), however interesting it might have been, all had its unpleasant side, so it was nice to have a rest." (p61) There is a fair degree of understatement in his description and his complaints are gently voiced. The *sang froid* of this gentleman in his sixties would do credit to any English stiff upper lip.

He is only marginally more outspoken than St John or Enriquez, and of a different breed to writers such as O'Hanlon and Barclay. "It is impossible to prevent infection by practising cleanliness in a country where I have seen a mother with a sick child use her hand as a chamber pot. Fatalistic resignation is needed!" (p136)

We come a little closer to Tillema, the man, when we hear him relating the lists of items he packed for the expedition.

"I make a list of over 250 queries about the journey, luggage, etc etc" is one of his headings. He takes, for example, "short and long nosed pliers, wire cutters, monkey grips, screwdrivers ... hooks on which to hang backdrops for photos, hammers, saws, brace and bits, lubricating oil, hard grease, steel and copper wire, hacksaws, glue for labels and for gluing detached leather work on the cameras....." (p41) Indeed some of his most animated writing occurs not when he is deep in the Apo Kayan jungle but when he is deep in the description of his painstakingly detailed preparations:

"Oh yes! I forgot to say that the contents of the tin was shown on the lid, by drawings not writing, thus avoiding searching, which can be irritating when there is something wrong."

We probably do not need to be told that "The packing of my many effects occasioned a great deal of anxiety". It is not just the obsessional meticulousness of Tillema which is revealing but also the naivety with which he reveals his obsessions. However, "Thanks to this meticulous care, I did not experience any serious setbacks." (p48)

One of the few occasions when Tillema does communicate his feelings is after an ordeal involving the crossing of a log bridge over a deep ravine. "That night I dreamed that I was walking with Elzinga across a tree trunk, a long one, situated over a

very deep ravine. In the middle, I stumbled. I held tight to my companion, and together we fell downwards, without reaching the ground. ... Fortunately I woke up and realised that I was lying in my camp bed in the *kubu* (stopping place).But my self confidence was gone, which was more serious. I would not have walked over all those tree trunk bridges of yesterday for anything. I ... asked how much delay it would cause to install a handrail of rattan or bamboo on each subsequent bridge. Elzinga put my mind at rest; in the following part of the road (only 12 km) all the bridges were in good order, just renewed. That was a load off my mind."

Some of the most interesting detail regarding aspects of Dayak culture occurs in the lengthy captions to his photographs, especially in the second part of the book which bears the transposed title: *The Apo Kayan in Picture and Word*. Tillema says a great deal with his photographs as well as with his words.

To sum up, our model might have been based on H F Tillema: "The typical explorer is knowledgeable about the country through which he travels ... has companions of similar status to his own and is generally in charge or joint-charge of the expedition. The expedition employs numerous servants, whether guides, interpreters, cooks or porters. There is much baggage, including provision for samples of flora and fauna to be preserved. The expedition enjoys the backing (official or unofficial) of either government or well placed civil servants and/or some prestigious learned society. The explorer may also have been resident as a government official in that country ... for some time. He has firm opinions and believes that he is serving mankind in one way or another. His attitude to the native population is benign paternalism..." (see above, p6). If we substitute film and camera equipment for samples of flora and fauna, it is totally accurate.

However, though Tillema's attitude to the native population might be described as benign paternalism it cannot be said to contain clear cut prejudices about racial groups and women. And while his style of writing is balanced it lacks the urbanity and cool wit of writers such as Enriquez and Harrisson. Like our model, though, he is indeed modest and the tone of his writing does reveal an underlying confidence in the rightness of his actions and beliefs. Furthermore, as we have already noted, there is very little in the way of personal details of activity or thought and feeling.

The Model Explorer revisited

From Spenser St John through to Tillema we see our model explorer-traveller through eight decades and across several nations. However interesting the differences, it is the similarities which are remarkable. What, then, are the similarities and why do they exist? We need to analyse the nature of the similarities so that we can discover, for instance, the extent to which they are the result of something inherent in the mode of exploration.

It is in the nature of the travelling where one might expect many of the similarities to lie. Journeys tend to be months in duration and hundreds of miles in length and mainly, though not exclusively, by river. The travellers are generally accompanied by one or more persons of their own race and class and to have official or semi-official backing. There seem to be no cases where the writer is not in charge of the expedition, except where other members of Tom Harrisson's party write their own chapters.

All of the journeys described were at the very least difficult and uncomfortable. Many of them were also dangerous, though the *sang froid* of most of the writers makes the level of difficulty hard to gauge. There is little here so far to surprise us.

One of the more striking features of the writing of these typical explorers is the extent to which the day by day journal is avoided. St John comes closest to producing the rewritten diary - and Beccari to the rewritten botanist's notebook. The narrative force is very noticeable in all the others, except in parts of Tom Harrisson's compilation. What has taken place is a deliberate reworking of the journey experience into the form of travel-writing (or expedition-reporting). Diary entries, jottings, recollections, specimen notes - all have been transformed into a new kind of text. Some writers have achieved this better than others - but then some are simply more talented writers.

We have seen that many of the writers adopt a lyrical style from time to time, usually when describing the vastness of the vista or the enormity of the jungle. Such passages are fairly rare and seem as much brief moments of relaxation for the

restrained and careful writers as usefully evocative pictures for the readers.

Given the overall similarity of style and approach which we have noted, one is led to one of two conclusions - that there was a perceived style for the genre of writing to which all such authors aspired or that the class and culture of these writers impelled them to write in a particular way. Given that we are all products of our own cultures, it is impossible to separate the two completely. More profitable will be a comparison with later writers; it will be interesting to see if the same holds true in the second half of the twentieth century.

It is perhaps in the selection of material that the greatest variation occurs, according to the predominant interests of the writers - ethnological, botanical, photographic or whatever. Most tend to exclude that which the lay reader finds the most fascinating: the small, mundane and personal detail. In terms of audience one must conclude that most of these traveller-writers had in mind a reader almost as knowledgeable as themselves - or at least one with very similar interests. A reasonable assumption - but one which tends to exclude a more general readership.

Humour and colloquial English are rare in this writing. What humour exists is extremely understated and lies in the reader's ability to perceive fairly delicate irony.

Very little of the writing is in any way sensational. Without exception, the accounts treat head-hunting with calm rationality and an academic distance. Further, they rarely draw attention to the discomforts and privations the writers are suffering. This does not appear to be a studied "look how stoical I am" attitude; it seems (as far as one can tell) to be simply as much a part of the explorers' baggage as the quinine and bandages. The impression of calm is heightened because of the lack of the personal. From Boyle through to Tillema, the style is not so much impersonal (far from it) as lacking reference to personal and private feelings. The personal *stays* private: no doubt as these authors would think right and proper.

Stoicism, *sang froid* - and confidence: these are the hallmarks of the writers. Whatever the opinions being expressed, from the conservative St John to the radical Harrisson, they are expressed with a public school and Oxbridge confidence (or their Continental equivalent) which comes of an expectation

that the views will be heeded, will be taken seriously - they will not have to fight for an audience. And, of course, they were right.

The more learned and experienced the writer, the more likely he (in these cases always male) is to appreciate the culture of the Dyak and Punan, the less likely to be sensational or dismissive of primitive cultures. It is interesting how "progressive" some of the early explorers are. One conclusion might be that these people (with the exception of borderline cases such as Alder) are truly *thoughtful travellers*. This is not to say that the cliché "*travel broadens the mind*" is necessarily true. From the evidence so far I would suggest that a narrow mind remains narrow however far it travels. A broad mind - and many of these people have remarkably broad and far-ranging minds - become broader. Such people are able to learn from their travel, and do so.

Motivation - or excuse - has not been hard to detect. The one underlying motive is *curiosity*, however sophisticated this becomes in terms of a pursuit of knowledge or a recording of vanishing cultures. Most would claim to be working from noble motives, however much wildlife they were shooting, and none would admit to undertaking travels for the sheer pleasure or adventure of it. Travellers or tramps, they needed to have an excuse.

Chapter Three - Tramps With Different Excuses

We have considered the writer-explorers who went tramping through Borneo with their excuse and seen how closely most of them resemble our model. In Chapter Four we will see that there has been no shortage of more recent travellers who have tramped through with very little excuse at all. There were, however, a small but interesting group of travellers who journeyed in Borneo with various different excuses, and subsequently wrote about their travels. We will consider them one by one, investigate their excuses and see what kind of resemblance they bear to the writer-explorers.

H de Windt: *On the Equator*

De Windt is an interesting case because he seems so much like the explorers and yet is subtly different. The most striking difference is, of course, not so subtle: i.e. he isn't exploring, merely travelling, observing and enjoying. As such he is a proto-tourist, taking the traditional Grand Tour to extremes!

In "On the Equator" we have the reflections of a Victorian gentleman going about his travels. He is educated without being learned and can comment intelligently on what he observes (in contrast to Clutterbuck, see below) but has no underlying knowledge of the area. In this way he is typical of many an observant traveller. The explorers do their homework better.

Again, in common with many travellers, he is prone to generalizations and particularly to snap judgements about places and people. In the case of the latter, frequently failing to distinguish between tribe and race.

He notes the indolence of all Easterners, praises the Sea Dyaks for their bravery (though they are "piratical") and blames the Land Dyaks for their cowardice. The attraction of the brave but wicked against the weak but well-meaning suffuses Western observations about other races. It is as pronounced in writing about India and Africa as it is about Borneo. (The fierce Pathan who causes the death of so many British soldiers is preferred to the pacific Tamil who prefers farming.) Is this a British trait or

a wider one? Is it particularly true of imperial times or equal true today?

The following is typical: "They looked fine hardy fellows, and much broader made than any natives I had yet seen in Borneo, but were of far less pleasing aspect than our friends the Kanowits, scarcely deigning to look at the launch as we passed them, but sweeping along down stream with a scowl on their ill-favoured features." "The Kayans, on the other hand, are the finest and most civilized aboriginal race in the island..." Not forgetting the half-caste, who, "like most of his race, cares but little for anything but filthy lucre" (p99) - not one of the most perceptive of observations on the plight of people of mixed race.

De Windt's style is reminiscent of some of the writers discussed earlier. He has a laconic humour and is given to understatement. "He was working out a sentence of fifteen years for the murder of a Chinaman, whose head he had one day conceived a desire to possess, which desire he had promptly gratified!" (p47). The passage which follows demonstrates the calm confidence of the gentleman traveller from its "excellent curry" to its "By Jove". Its reflection on the fleeting nature of pleasure is very much that of a leisured person who has had a good share of such moments!

"A light was placed in her little cabin, which shone like a firefly over the sands, giving promise of good things within, to which we were shortly doing justice, in the shape of an excellent fowl curry (prepared by the murderer), washed down by a bottle of claret cool and fresh from the spring on shore, where it had been placed on arrival. The night was beautiful and starlit, and, our repast over, the awning was removed and we sat out enjoying our cigars in the cool night breeze blowing in fresh and strong from the sea. The quiet ripple of the waves as they broke on the sandy beach had a soothing effect very favourable to reflection (and haccy) and the lights of the little fishing village twinkling at the foot of the black and rugged peak of Santubong - which rose to a height of 1500 feet above our heads, and behind which the moon was just rising - presented a fine and uncommon picture. But alas! our enjoyment, like many others in this world, was of short duration, and received a severe shock from a sudden exclamation by H of "By Jove! we have forgotten the mosquito curtains! We shall be eaten alive!" (p49)

Like many of his contemporaries and successors, De Windt sees the virtue of a place in terms of its ability to produce increasing revenue. "A better proof of the progress the country is making cannot be shown than comparing the revenues of 1877-78 185,552 dollars and 197,855 dollars respectively - with that of 1871, which was only 157,501 dollars, thus showing an increase of about £40,000 in seven years." The idea of measuring progress in pounds sterling will not surprise anyone who lives in the latter decades of the 20th Century but one might have expected the a Victorian gentleman to have added a rider to do with morality or civilization. No doubt he believed that if the revenue rose, civilization must be on the increase - and if one believed that Western cultural values were the same as civilization he would probably have been correct.

Included in "civilized values" in De Windt's time was sport, and sport to De Windt meant hunting. Although there is little of this - Borneo, he comments, isn't big game country - there is a description of the killing of an orang utan which is very chilling to most late 20th century readers.

As far as we can tell, De Windt does not travel with a large retinue or have official backing, but he finds no difficulty in getting assistance when he needs it. Nor does he have a great deal of background understanding and information. What he does have are clear cut prejudices, decided opinions and a good deal of confidence. He is, in many ways, a light-weight version of the true explorers. His actual baggage is lighter but the weight of knowledge and understanding is lighter too.

Walter J Clutterbuck: *About Ceylon and Borneo*

In *About Ceylon and Borneo*, Walter Clutterbuck relates his travels in those two countries in a way which might at first convince the reader that he, too, was a dedicated explorer and seeker after knowledge. It is soon apparent, however, that he is nothing of the sort.

The real purpose of Clutterbuck's journey is to hunt. "We had come here to shoot" he says, and his qualifications for anything else are slim. He makes no secret of the fact that Borneo disappoints him. "It is not a good sporting country, although there is plenty of game..." For a gentleman of his generation and class, sport does not mean cricket or rugby, it seems to mean shooting animals.

Unable to detail his successful hunts, he pads out his book with impressions of the country. These impressions, while sometimes amusing, are rarely informative and never erudite. His reflections on the people he encounters range from the derision with which he treats the Chinese to the arrogance he bestows on other natives of Borneo.

On the Chinese: "These Chinamen are so hopelessly Chinese and unlike anything which has been brought up under European influence that we cannot understand them....It does not seem in their nature to laugh" (p134-5) or "The Chinese coolies who are opening an estate sometimes die off like rats". (p156)

There is a chapter titled "Natives of Borneo" but it contains only three paragraphs on the subject, one on the Dyaks and two on Sulus. The first is very short on fact and is mainly anecdotal information on the suitability of Dyaks for the police force which is of dubious veracity. For example "These Dyak policemen, when they have fired one shot at their adversaries, like to throw away their guns and dash in with a knife, yelling like madmen." (p186) Equally dubious is his description of the Sulu whom he characterizes as very light skinned. In my edition someone has annotated the margin of page 186 with "You must be joking". Elsewhere he uses terms such as "heathens" and "naked savages" without qualm.

Like many travellers, he makes sweeping generalizations about whole races on what must be the most slender of evidence.

Malays are like this, Dyaks like that, Chinese like that... The Singhalese, for instance, are "a tall bearded race of men: a crafty subterfuging people, who look effeminately noble and are utterly pluckless." (p230)

Though he can exhibit patronising affection for younger members of the native population "a number of jolly little children" his contempt is generally barely hidden. "There seemed something about these nauseous smells, arising from the falling tide or the aroma of the inhabitants..." (p216) Or when visiting the Sultan of Brunei: "We briefly told him in our best Malay that we had come down to see his city ... in order to call and pay our most humble respects to one who merited much more than we could do for him (this was true as we neither had done nor intended to do, anything for this sovereign)." (p213)

English superiority is assumed and with it goes a tone of immense self-satisfaction. "Aren't I a fine witty fellow?" is the underlying question expecting the answer "Absolutely, old chap!"

His prose varies between the would-be lyrical and the colloquial. "This fern looks like a very large and green hart's tongue, and I believe it is called the large elk's horn. In this way it grows on a thread balancing itself between us (sic) mortals on this hot earth and heaven's blue vaults above." (p166) "Then the leeches - but I have already told you enough to make it apparent that life in this low-lying jungle, even in fine weather, is not all bliss." (p182) His descriptions of insects or leeches are, anyway, unsatisfactory. They are verbose but empty. He writes about 200 words on the subject of spiders which says nothing of substance, the flavour of which will be apparent from this extract (p146) "But when one of these fellows took it into his enormous head to besprawl himself all over my scalp, this seemed to me too bad, as it was encroaching on the kindness of my disposition."

It is as if he has picked up some of the desire to be a gentleman scientist or collector without any of the intellectual capacity or consuming interest which characterized them.

What, then, does a traveller like Clutterbuck have in common with the explorers? He has companions of his own status and various unspecified "men" who are presumably servants of some kind. He seems to be in charge of the expedition but

leadership, like much else in this narrative, is left utterly vague. He shares the prejudices about certain racial groups and has the typical confidence in the rightness of his actions and beliefs. In other ways he is quite unlike the model explorer. He does not have the backing of government or prestigious societies and knows very little about the land through which he travels. His style of writing attempts to be dry and witty but fails to be urbane and balanced. Overall, it is his lack of learning which marks Clutterbuck out from the true explorers. He has much in common with Charles Miller (see below p67); he hasn't done his homework and, perhaps more significantly, shows no real understanding of the extent of his ignorance. Basically, he isn't *interested and involved* in the country in the way in which all of the writers discussed in chapter two are. At the very least, Lumholtz, Enriquez, Hose and company, all *cared*. Clutterbuck didn't and, one suspects, couldn't.

Osa Johnson: *The Last Adventure*

Osa Johnson is accompanying her husband Martin on one of his film-making expeditions. He has filmed Africa and now wishes to have a shot at darkest Borneo. The Lakan River in Sabah is the chosen area and the pair arrive not only with crates of equipment but also a large retinue of employees, locally recruited.

Osa Johnson has extended something which would have made a chatty magazine article into a book - and the strain shows. As with other travel writing, the narrative is interspersed with anecdote and details of geography, tribe or custom. Unfortunately, her understanding of these is very limited.

She appears to be interested in everything but in reality and her interest is shallow. Her knowledge of Bornean people, for example, is extremely restricted. She mentions that the term "Dyaks" is often applied indiscriminately but merely adds by way of elucidation that they are "comprised of many tribes having diverse ancestral origins, a real puzzle for the ethnographers" - and a puzzle with which she is going to trouble herself! The depth of her knowledge is on a par with Clutterbuck's and her command of language ("comprised of" above is one example) less sure.

Nor is her grasp of even simple factual detail to be relied upon. She writes (p70) that "The bite of a scorpion in an adult is not usually fatal". It is the sting which may cause fatality, not the bite - and the bats in the caves of Borneo do not prey on the swifts or their nests (p168).

Johnson's writing tends to be sentimental and is prone to purple passages. "On we went, further into this strange land. By the winding river we were able to explore the oddest corners of Borneo. Now we're on an excursion to another madcap phenomenon of this isle of the incomprehensible. On and on we went, through the unyielding jungle, the tropical rain forest that chokes this equatorial land. Ahead of us were vast caves which provided a luxury for a Chinese banquet. These stupendous grottoes yield treasures for celestial feasting." (p166)

There is much talk of the "dread practice" of headhunting, "The black curse of this land has been the gruesome pursuit..." and no hazard is passed over if it can be dramatized.

If the book adds little to one's understanding of Borneo it tells us a good deal about the writer. She, unlike Moira Dickson (see below), has travelled a fair distance in miles but mentally has hardly moved at all.

Again, there are some similarities between Osa Johnson and our model. There is the retinue of employees, the benign condescension and the confidence in her actions and beliefs, together with a certain level of official backing.

However, in the paucity of knowledge about the country, the lack of academic foundation and the superficiality of her findings, she differs markedly. Further, her style, lacking urbanity, wit and euphony, is utterly unlike that of an Enriquez or Harrisson.

A greater contrast with MacDonald or Dickson would be difficult to imagine. Whereas they are deeply interested in a wide range of things, Johnson is superficially interested in rather fewer things. Dickson, MacDonald and the writer-explorers tend to have their own individual ways of looking at what they experience, Johnson doesn't. She is given to reaction rather than reflection and, while some writers can make such instantaneous response amusing and thought-provoking, Osa Johnson lacks that talent.

Charles C Miller: *Black Borneo*

It is here we encounter our epigram "The only difference between an explorer and a tramp is an excuse." He continues, "The tramp quite frankly tramps around; the explorer tries to justify it. Time was when all he had to do was go out and sit around some bar in Singapore and come back with some new tall ones. That wasn't bad. But now he has to show results. He has to drag in bones, hides, artefacts, ore samples, in fact turn himself into a geographical junk man. Worse, he is supposed to take scientific notes, draw maps, jot down stellar observations and otherwise conduct himself according to some approved bookkeeping system. And that, no matter how you looked at it, is work.

"...Then quite by accident I learned you did not have to drag in a lot of junk if you just brought back the pictures. One ounce of film would replace a ton of bones. You still had to carry the camera, but at least you could always hire a boy for the tougher stretches."

It will be apparent by now why Charles Miller has not been categorized with the explorers.

His motives become clearer later in the book. "All my journey so far didn't really count. The country I was in had been visited by other white men. ...Until I could get into the Apo-Kayan, the blackest part of Black Borneo, my trip hadn't begun. Not until then could I see things no white man had ever seen before, take pictures no other camera had ever taken, discover things no one else had ever dreamed about." (p65) The difference which is highlighted here, perhaps, between Miller and the true explorers is not the desire to discover the new but the stress on the personal. That "*I* could see things" is more important than the fact that new things could be seen, and certainly more important than the idea that something new could be added to human understanding.

Charles Miller was an American who managed to achieve the backing and financing of his adventure from a Miss Leona Jay - whom he subsequently and swiftly married. He was aware of the more sensational stories about Borneo and set out with his prejudices at the ready.

"My own father, who devoted his life to help build the Dutch East Indies ... scared all the savages out of the territory..." (p7-p8)

Miller has no official backing and his entourage is small. His companions are a camera assistant, Wang Lo, and Achmed, Admo Wirio and Kitjil who "could fight like fiends, ...worked like dogs...but when it came to personality they were three coffee beans."

He claims that Borneo is misunderstood because of circus side show freaks and yet he shares many of those very prejudices. He has fastened on to the stories of head-hunting and confused them with ideas of cannibalism (which is mentioned persistently) and the popular comic-book cliché of boiling victims in a pot. "The Dyaks have a quaint habit of picking off strangers found wandering around in the jungle ... Warriors of (village) one and three would always have a pot boiling for each other." The use of "quaint" tells us that he isn't intimidated by this at all. This is also the purpose of expressions like this: "This was no time to lose our heads...we had to remain calm and cool... So we had another drink."

At the root of Miller's thinking we find the following. "The truth is that Borneo is not a new country emerging from the age of dinosaurs but an old civilization returning to the Stone Age." He doesn't explain the evidence for pronouncing this to be "the truth", but he refers to it repeatedly. "...*adat* is responsible for the retrogression of the Dyaks. Once they were an intellectual, highly progressive race..." and again, "Maybe life counts so little because the race is receding instead of advancing."

Along with these pseudo-academic pronouncements go comparable statements about different racial groups.

"I am firmly convinced that the only reason a Punan will tackle a panther is because he doesn't know any better." (p211) "Borneo's art died thousands of years ago...Dyaks are clever but in originating anything they are utterly lacking in creative ability. They are in deadly fear of novelty and in this fear lies the key to the riddle of Borneo." (p16)

Again, "The Dyaks are great hunters but they seldom get anything." "In view of the cowardice of the sedentary Dyaks..." (p211) or: "Kenja Dyaks...became the cruellest, most ferocious,

most treacherous killers in all Borneo. ... They take more heads, eat more human flesh and cause more trouble than any other 10 tribes combined. But they are not brave. Their dirty work is done from ambush against numerically inferior war parties." (p123)

All of Miller's assertions have to be taken with a large pinch of salt. *Are* the Kenja Dyaks correctly named? *Are* they superior to other races in Borneo? *Is* the Kenja Dyak dialect the Oxford accent of Borneo?

Underlying all is a clear dislike of the country which others have found so fascinating and charming. "Yet over and above the effluvium of the mud rode the mysterious scent of the Orient, the mystery consisting in so little smelling so bad."

He describes the town of Samarinda as "beautiful and poisonous...heavy viscosity of its civic atmosphere... smothering influence of the jungle..."

Basically he is *out of sympathy* with his surroundings. There is something to malign in everything. "The she-cats of Borneo are equally beautiful." His appreciation of native music is to compare it to a pack of lovesick dogs at full moon and mixed with his admiration of "marvellous physiques" is derision and amused disdain for local customs and beliefs.

In his better moments Miller has something of Chandler's (or even Twain's) style. "Most of the disputes concern women, since love is not only free but downright philanthropic." "A swamp was no wetter than the moss we had for a bed. Every time I turned my head I had to bale out my ears." However, writing which treats almost everything as amusing, and in so doing demeans it, can swiftly become tiresome.

His writing is characterized by short or non-sentences. "Then just white chalk." "When I slapped a slug from my rifle between his knobby eyes." He likes to make the most of danger while maintaining his "here I am menaced by headhunters but keeping cool" style.

This brisk style exists side by side with over-written, melodramatic descriptive passages. "The place was a reeking bath of poisonous vapour writhing through a dark green gloom in which light and air had decayed to feed the dripping moss. ... Waxy leaves, dragging masses of bearded moss, thread like

clusters of orchidaceous air roots, parasitic tree ferns, ropy tangles of lianas, all hung like torn wallpaper from a solid ceiling that was the single crown."

"...mystic escarpment...a wall of poisonous beauty... Something lay beyond that wall, and whatever it was it was evil."

However, his description of the journey through the jungle up into Apu is written with the power of emotions still strongly felt. These real feelings seem to encourage a more original line in simile. "My lungs served as little more than condensing chambers for the liquid air." "Sweat ... had about as much chance as a drop of water on a hot stove lid. My shirt dried out and became stiff as a board. My over-long hair ... responded to a comb with all the pliability of a wire brush." (p81)

Certainly the ascent of the escarpment sounds hard going: "Emaciated and heat stricken, our bodies a mass of open sores and infected bites, our feet and hands cut and bleeding..." The ironic detachment is absent - as it is when he writes of the death of his assistant Wang Lo, who perishes in a botched attempt to kill or capture an orang utan and to photograph it. Miller is chastened and sentimental.

Unlike the true explorers, Miller is not knowledgeable about his surroundings and, perhaps more significantly, does not appear to gain much knowledge as he travels.

"If I had been a scientist," says Miller "I could have classified the flora and fauna..." His shortcomings are only too apparent and the results of his attempts to gather and record information are not only amateur but, as we have remarked already, unreliable. According to Miller the Apu Kajan used to mine gold and iron and do their own smelting etc up to 50 years before (c1900). Gold and diamonds are to be found in abundance, he claims...

He gives anecdotal details of sexual mores, wedding customs and so on but it is hard to know how he has acquired his information - presumably by talking to Dyaks through his interpreter rather than observation.

One suspects that sometimes he was told yarns which took advantage of his credulity; for example, by the old woman who related to him how she cut off her ex-sweetheart's fingers and used them for hat decorations, "Women, she assured me

gravely, knew lots of tricks like that, and when it came to carving up a human body for a cannibalistic feast, only women knew how to select the choicest morsels." (p155)

"Ceremonies, festivals, dances, religious demonstrations and feats are generally conceded by the exploring fraternity to be the index to a tribe's habits. ... But to me the true spirit of a race is revealed by the manner in which it gets up in the morning." An amusing aside if spoken by someone with a true knowledge of those ceremonies and festivals, a confession of ignorance elsewhere.

This is not the language of the true anthropologist or even the neutral observer: "The clock had been pushed back 10 000 years. With my eyes I was looking at a crowd of dirty ignorant superstitious Dyaks decked out in cheap calico rags, 10c store trinkets and imitation finery, but what I was seeing was a weird assembly of fighting men resurrected from the ancient past and dressed in all the barbaric splendour of a race devoted to symbolic pageantry... Tonight they were the reincarnation of a savage, lusty, man-eating, head-hunting, blood-loving bunch of stone-age men who in their race through life had erupted into eternity." (p149)

"Maybe the night was just a disgusting exhibition of unleashed lust. There are many who think so. And then again the Dyaks may find something sublimely elemental in their festival of *mamat ulu*. Blood, death, spirits and sex, the powerful essentials of primitive life, all mixed up together in a barbaric ritual that does not end until every person in the kampong achieves the ultimate of physical relief and spiritual satisfaction. When it is over all desire is gone. No religion can do more." (p154) (Some of the missionaries to Borneo might have had some reservations about this last statement!)

Miller, we can see, shares little with the true explorers, least of all a love of the country and an admiration for its people. What he does have in common is a determination to press on in the face of discomfort and adversity and the strength to do it.

Malcolm MacDonald: *Borneo People*

It would be hard to find a greater contrast to writers such as Clutterbuck, Miller and Johnson than Malcolm MacDonald.

His reason for being there is that he is a government emissary - indeed he is the Governor General of Malaya and British Borneo (1946-8, subsequently Commissioner General for the U.K. in S.E.Asia). One suspects that he sees himself in the mould of the Brookes - firm, paternal, devoted to the people, and mildly eccentric - travelling around the country in his kilt...

Each section of the book has its history and description of the peoples, followed by and to some extent interspersed with narrative of his travels among them. The travels are spread over a number of years. The result is a mixture of travel, political memoir and geography-cum-history written with great knowledge, affection and modesty.

The account is not entirely chronological in that each section tells the story of his experiences with a particular people, the Iban or the Kayan, throughout a period of time and then goes back in time when to begin the story of encounters with another people. But, like a good storyteller, he keeps the fate of Segura hidden till late in the book, even though the main section on the Ibans is complete. "I hoped that now she was married, Segura would live happily ever after. If the reader wishes to know whether my hope was realized, he must exercise his patience until later in this book."

He is tolerant of all races and tribes. Of the Japanese, he says, "In fairness it must be said that the Japanese concerned were the brutal military class, the worst representatives of their talented nation." (p37) He befriends families from various areas, including an Iban family, in whom he takes a particular interest. Indeed, the trials and tribulations of Segura, one of the daughters, form an intriguing "subplot" to the book.

"I doubt whether the Ibans are the ablest natives in Sarawak. The Kayans and Kenyahs are doughtier warriors, wiser councillors and finer artists. But the Ibans are the most dynamic." (p69) "That was my introduction to the bumptious, aggressive and loveable Ibans." (p73) One can hardly imagine Miller describing any of the people he met as loveable! Even

his less positive comments are very gentle: "Chinese merchants settle to pursue their eternal aim of making money." (p118)

It is the warmth of his affection which is revealed time after time. "Oh Land Dyaks of Singgi Mountain, you were generous and good to us! With all my heart I hope that your guardian spirits will ensure that your padi harvests are bountiful, that your fruit trees bear rich crops, that when you go hunting you will catch many wild pigs, that your children will be legion and that you will all live long and happily. And I pray that my God also, who is the Giver of Life, will watch over you and bless you always." (p65)

About individuals MacDonald is not merely affectionate but effusive. Consider his lyrical description of one of his dancing partners. "When the Creator made Gawang, he made a lovely thing. Her figure was neat and comely...she had long black hair and honey-coloured skin. her eyes were dark and slanting, and she had a sweetly modelled nose and a delicious mouth." (p59)

(There is an engaging account of MacDonald's evening of dancing with Gawang for the audience - including the collapse of the floor during their performance. "...the thought of wooing and winning lovely Gawang had attractions (until) the sight of some all too realistic dirt in the room dissolved my idealized conception of life in primitive society.")

Iban girls in particular appeal to his aesthetic, and one suspects, other senses. "It was as if a group of goddesses were visiting the earth, condescending for a while to assume human form." (p78)

Later in the evening, however, he notices the Iban custom of red betel-stained and filed teeth and their shortness of stature but says, "I betray an Occidental prejudice. ... These are expressions of personal opinion and it would be unchivalrous to dwell on them unduly." Indeed, "The Iban girls at Song were a group of exquisite tropical flowers, and if they showed an occasional blemish it appeared significant only in contrast to the charm of the rest of the bouquet." (p81)

The charm of MacDonald's words is not reserved entirely for females. About the elderly chief, he writes, "Younger Iban chiefs have better brains or sharper wits; but none possesses in the same degree his shrewd common sense, personal magnetism and rare power of leadership." (p86) And about the

chief's family: "...I was to meet them many times ... and to know and love them as brothers."

MacDonald is far more interested in people than in flora and fauna. But it is their recent history and relationships rather than ethnography or anthropology which fascinates him. It is from this, amongst other traits, that we gain the very real sense of what it was like for him to be there.

One of the aspects of Borneo life which fascinates him is dancing. He participates vigorously himself, rendering Scottish and local dances for the enjoyment of the local population.

"I studied the steps of the dance. They were simple, like the restrained to-and-fro motions of Malay ronggeng, though more lively and spirited than that mild jogging. when the two girls retired after their effort, I said that I would perform..." (p59)

"Dancing is the finest of the up-river people's arts, and the Kayans and Kenyahs are its noblest exponents. Among them it is an accomplishment of unforgettable grace and beauty ... I shall reserve a description of it until the reader travels with me into Kayan country." (p92)

One notices the use of words like "noblest" and "grace and beauty" in contrast to the dismissive comments of Charles Miller.

There are paragraphs of detail about dancing, to the extent that MacDonald is in danger of boring his reader - a rare occurrence - for example in his description of the Kayan Monkey Dance. However, at the end of it he goes to some pains to explain that on this occasion he did not witness the unexpurgated version, though "I have since witnessed the unexpurgated romantic drama in a longhouse up the Baram River but I shall not venture on a more detailed description of it. ... the jest may be reprehensible, but it is an appeal to the common vulgarity of normal and robust, if rude, human minds, not to the warped senses of depraved individuals." (p234)

Elsewhere his descriptive powers, applied to both people and situations, are well employed: "The flesh of his face hung loose and pouchy, his eyes were small and pig-like, he had ears elongated to take heavy earrings, and an appallingly swollen nose drooped over his large, lascivious mouth... (p97) "Our boat began to toss and twist with sudden impetuousness. In places it

tipped from side to side in a frolicsome way not lacking a hint of mischief, and sometimes a shudder passed along its spine. In the ruffled, patchy, baffling river it was perplexed to find the right, safe course."

MacDonald rarely goes beyond a measured lyricism. "Here wisps of vapour trailed along narrow valleys, with hills protruding above them like huge boulders suspended in mid-air; and there white fleecy clouds avoided the low ground and wreathed themselves instead around the mountain peaks. So sometimes the airy shapes of fog sprawled underneath dark masses of earth superimposed above them, and at other times that order was reversed. ... According to the degree of its translucence, the outlines of slopes were silhouetted darkly or faintly, like objects seen through veils of varying thicknesses. So the landscape appeared like the half-actual and half-ghostly, beautiful and mysterious world portrayed in classical Chinese paintings." (p283)

The measured tone is apparent in much of the book and sentences like the following are reminiscent of the writing of the earlier explorers, with its gentle cadences and urbane voice. "Before I write of the great man, I must acquaint the reader with certain facts about the politics of the Baram which are relevant to his story." Or again, "...could not possibly entertain such caddish thoughts."

The gentlemanly echoes continue even in more exclamatory passages: "Oh crikey!" or "she was a pretty minx!"

MacDonald's own beliefs are firmly Christian, yet he is not dismissive about pagan beliefs. Only rarely does he allow himself a little gentle irony. For example regarding the spirits eating - or not eating - the food left for them: "I presumed ... that my eyes were not trained to perceive the effects of spiritual consumption on physical matter."

On the subject of missionary work and its effects he shows almost as much reservation as some of the clearly anti-missionary writers who were to follow. "Thus Western civilization was creeping into the interior of Sarawak, not, as sometimes happened in native states in earlier times, by means of guns and commerce, but with the Cross and the Christian ethic. These apparently gentler instruments are equally destructive of indigenous, traditional ways of life, and whether

they create more than they destroy depends on the tact and understanding with which they are employed." (p11p9)

Confident yet modest, restrained yet enthusiastic, MacDonald is a striking contrast to a Miller or a Clutterbuck. They are fundamentally out of sympathy with Borneo while he is the supreme example of the traveller who - while never losing his Scottishness or pretending to be anything other than he is - seems to be completely *in sympathy* with the culture and its people.

Mora Dickson: *A Season in Sarawak*

Mora Dickson's exact position and indeed the exact nature of her journey is not made explicit. She is concerned with the education of the native population and, partly through family connections - her brother-in-law is a government official - has a semi-official status. In her travels, she is accompanied by her husband and a varying number of white and/or Malay officials. She can hardly be considered an explorer as she is travelling the paths established by others, or more significantly, by other outsiders. In that sense she is a visitor rather than an explorer or a tourist.

She is a perceptive individual, much concerned for the well-being of the country and its inhabitants and seriously bothered by the effects of civilization. As a well-meaning liberal-minded English woman, she is unsure how development should best be managed and doubtful of some of its benefits.

Her racial comments are thoughtful, her descriptions of people and events long and detailed. Her accounts are the opposite of Clutterbuck's swift stereotyping. She offers no judgements on races or tribes; her opinions are given only about individuals. Overall, she shows a remarkable lack of prejudice.

Her tone is assured, balanced and educated. The evenness of tone is maintained in quite unpleasant situations and there are no histrionics about head-hunting, insects or the climate.

The style reflects the person: measured, thoughtfully phrased: "The engine would then be shipped, poles brought out, and the canoe steered with the most consummate art through shallows which would have assuredly wrecked any less well-guided vessel."

For all of her reserve, she is capable of well judged anecdote: "When the early morning came and the house still lay quiet I crept out to the small wooden latrine that the school children had built on stilts to find my friends, the pigs, grunting under the hole in the floor in a frenzy of expectation, expectation which their very presence effectively frustrated!"

Dickson's writing is neither academic nor lyrical. It does not lack emotion, but such feelings as are expressed are voiced

with moderation. It is a *sensible* account, totally accessible to the layman.

How far does Mora Dickson's account coincide with those of the archetypal explorer? She certainly has companions of her own status and a number of guides or assistants, though not a huge number - nor does she have large amounts of baggage. She is not collecting or categorizing anything except thoughts and impressions. She is partially in charge of the expedition and has the backing of government officials. She has decided opinions but *hopes*, rather than believes, I think, that she is serving mankind in some way. In her attitude to the native population she shows the greatest difference to the model - it is not benign paternalism or even maternalism she evinces but an open-minded tolerance and affection. Her writing is balanced and urbane and indeed shares many characteristics with the accounts of some of the best of the writers considered in chapter two. All it lacks is a certain sense of excitement. It is an account of a stimulating and interesting school trip - but an account written by the schoolteacher for the governors rather than by one of the pupils for a friend...

The differences, then, lie mainly in the attitudes and motives of someone like Mora Dickson. She is travelling the same kinds of distances and encountering similar kinds of hazards as the explorers but she is interested in different things - or more accurately, *she is interested in a different way*. In spite of the distance travelled and the physical difficulties encountered and overcome, hers is a journey very much conducted in the mind.

Wyn Sargent: *My Life with the Headhunters*

Sargent is an American journalist who comes to Indonesia to interview Indonesia's first female glider pilot and becomes involved in taking an expedition into Kalimantan to "explore the Central Borneo Jungles and hunt for a lost band of natives that are supposed to be living there" as the interpreter puts it. (p4) Why the Indonesian authorities should be so keen to draft a foreign female journalist accompanied by a 12 year old son for this task is never adequately explained. However, she does receive official backing and the escort of a handful of reluctant policemen and soldiers.

Sargent's style has the straightforward conversational quality of everyday reportage. It is eminently readable but lacks character. At moments of great tension or significance it rarely rises above the straightforwardly conversational and sometimes downright clichéd. For example:

"It was six feet long, weighed about five pounds, and it was stretched across my chest.

'It's a snake!' whispered Jmy.

'Don't move! It's looking around,' Sjam said.

Suddenly the snake bolted and was gone. Panggul stood looking into the canoe. 'No worry! Snake only little python. Not squeeze much. See in tree? He have many brothers and sisters there.'

I looked into the palm tree that had sheltered our canoe during the night. It was beset with crawling baby pythons. I closed my eyes. And fainted away." (p41) Again, "Suddenly a penetrating scream burst from the adjoining canoe and scared us all half to death." (p64)

Sargent's writing shows a strange mixture of the blunt and the coy. On the one hand, she cannot resist talking about toilets. After two references to lavatories, or the lack of them, in the preceding pages, we find, "Once you enter the jungle you may depend on never spending a private moment, which presents certain problems. There were no lavatory facilities on the houseboat, and if you could not cope with it, then you scarcely knew what to do with yourself in such an emergency. But a sarong, a coffee pot, and a coughing fit solved some of it." (p24) On the other hand, she seldom really discusses any bodily function and uses euphemisms such as *derriere* in place of more robust terms.

Not that the narrative is without sentiment. "And then he was gone. He climbed into his canoe, turned it towards the centre current, and paddled up the river. Back into the jungle to return to his people. And I was alone. Left with his tears running down my hand." (p180)

The impression is that of a traveller trying hard to be a writer. "Puffy popcorn clouds sailed around in a sky turned blue with late morning, and gay, pleasant smells stole secretly up from an earth that was nearly choked with green grass and bushes. The trees leaned against each other for support and then joined branches at the top to spread an umbrella ceiling of foliage over the tangled undergrowth among the trunks." (p137) The tautologies have the scent of desperation about them.

Sargent is one of the travellers who wishes to communicate every hardship and every fear and spare the reader nothing - in contrast to a great many of the writers we have considered. "It's not much fun to travel in a canoe on a jungle river. There are too many things around that are frightening. The dark trees on the riverbanks overhang the river and throw down shadows that are unfriendly. Sometimes a limb is seen, worn smooth in the middle where headhunters have sat on it, waiting for an animal or the enemy to pass by. This makes the air gloomy and threatening. The river itself is not without its own dangers. It gargles up a chilling chorus of its own from the noise of snakes... " (p37) She spares us no details of the injuries and diseases she and the companions suffer, nor of the initiation ceremony she goes through to become a Dyak. The mystery is how she managed to remember it all, including the chant which she quotes in the original and in translation. (p133)

Death and hunger accompany the appallingly ill-prepared expedition and they are lucky to survive at all. It is perhaps not surprising that the overall impression we get from the account is negative. "The beauty of the stars was overshadowed by the ugliness of everything else." (p63) Even the description of orang utan is negative, "...when they snarled we could see their sharply pointed teeth and little strings of frosty saliva that stretched from the upper jaws to the lower. Their eyes were red and fierce. From their noses dripped long threads of yellow mucus."

Sargent's opinions of the Dyaks are likewise negative. "We were discovering that the Dyaks were a limited and unfortunately unresourceful people. They were tribes who had never invented an alphabet, had no concept of calendar time, had never built anything more monumental than shacks of poles and thatch, had never used the wheel or a plough, depended entirely on canoes for transportation, and had no more self-government than a chief who had, perhaps, earned his position by cutting off human heads. ... nothing is ever repaired in a Dyak village. (p37-38)

Interspersed with the narrative are sections containing gobbets of information on customs and beliefs. There is an attempt in Chapter 6 to explain Dyak religion including a table of gods. We are told that it was nearly three years before she was able to piece together the components of the "delicate fabric the Dyaks called their religion" (p68) but she is no academic and although it is a brave attempt, she is as unqualified to do the job as my trying to describe the interior workings of the word processor I am using. Three pages is insufficient to describe, even in summary, a belief system which has taken others whole books.

Sargent has a certain amount in common with Miller, especially the obsession with headhunters, a term she uses interchangeably with Dyak or indeed any native of the interior of Borneo. She is not quite so out of sympathy with country as Miller, nor as racially biassed, but she shares his negativity and lack of knowledge about the country through which she is travelling. Unlike him, however, she is affected by the journey, in particular by the deprivation that she observes; so much so that on return to America she organizes a large-scale relief operation and returns with it. The suffering she has gone through has resulted in action rather than recrimination or bitterness. Not only that, she has also "learned that many American attempts to provide relief goods to foreign nations have backfired ... We (the Sargent-Dyak Fund, Inc.) felt that it would be an unkindness as well as an injustice to the Dyak civilization to trap and tangle these primitive people with 'things'." (p223) By the end of the book, she has come to use the word "civilization" to describe the society she maligned earlier.

All in all, Sargent has little in common with the explorers. In spite of the official backing, the expedition is poorly prepared and hopelessly resourced. The entourage is small and so is its fund of knowledge. The style does not have their urbanity

and balance - and certainly does not tend to understatement. And in the case of Sargent, the description of the model explorer as modest but with an underlying confidence could almost be reversed.

*

What can these travellers with varied excuses tell us about the business of writing about one's travels? What kind of light do they throw on the ranks of explorer-writers whom we examined in the previous chapter? What do these travellers have in common with our model explorers?

The evidence corroborates the common sense view that different travellers can cover the same ground and see the same things but experience and record them very differently. (It is surely no coincidence that Miller is constantly referring to delay and frustration caused by unfavourable omens, while Dickson never mentions such problems.) What seems to be the determining factor is the purpose for which the journey is undertaken. Whether it is the *purpose itself* which affects the writing or the *type of person* who undertakes a journey for a particular purpose hardly matters.

The real explorers, then, produce written accounts which are markedly different from those written by any of these travellers with their various excuses. And this is true whether they are mid-19th century, turn of the century, or as recent as Tom Harrisson. Their travel writing constitutes one major fairly homogenous strand or category.

Of those with other excuses we can group Clutterbuck, de Windt, Johnson, Miller and Sargent (also the marginal "explorer", W F Alder [see Chapter 2]) together. They share (in varying degrees) the following characteristics:

- a lack of knowledge;
- a predisposition to prejudice & stereotype;
- a less urbane and witty, understated style;
- little or no questioning of Western values;
- a less reflective tone, and an attitude less likely to be changed by the experience;
- a greater likelihood to stress headhunting and other sensational items;

- a tendency to be more personal in the narrative.

MacDonald and Dickson are excluded from these generalizations. They clearly have something of the seriousness of intent of the explorers and, as we have already noted, share other characteristics with our model. It may be that they deduce different things from their observations because the historical situation in which they find themselves precludes many of the pre-1939 assumptions, though we can see some of their attitudes adumbrated by Harrisson.

In this way we can detect an historical progression from the old explorers - Victorian, Edwardian, even inter-war - through more questioning characters towards the development of "modern" attitudes.

More recent Western travellers can make fewer assumptions - the firm foundations on which Hose and Enriquez rested have shifted. Novelists and poets found the ground moving decades earlier. It required World War II and the collapse of imperialism to shake most of the travel-writers. In the following section we will examine the ranks of the post-war travellers who by and large tramped without an excuse.

Chapter Four - Tramps without an excuse?

Geographical exploration is a finite activity. Travel is not. Yet long after the rivers and mountains, flora and fauna, culture and ethnography of Borneo were well known and carefully documented, people wanted to continue exploring it. As such, exploration (or ethnological research or something equally high-sounding) was still often their excuse, but an increasingly thin one, as we shall see. Others tramped without any excuse, on the strength of a whim, a desire to experience new things, to have an adventure.

James Barclay: *A Stroll through Borneo*

Barclay had come to Borneo to work for a firm of seismic contractors who were surveying areas of jungle for Shell Oil. In keeping with the ideas of many English people, he thought he was coming to "a land of wildmen and headhunters". "Instead I quickly found that the local people were friendly and hospitable." Having visited an Iban festival, he became "hooked".

"I found this visit to an Iban festival extremely interesting and enjoyable so I decided to make an extended trip right across the whole island of Borneo, from Sarawak on the West coast upriver into the central highland area and then down river to the eastern coast in Kalimantan." As an explanation, this is weak. To go to a festival and enjoy it so much that you decide to walk across one of the largest and most impenetrable islands in the world?

Barclay's excuse seems to consist of little more than a whim: the truly illogical desire of certain humans to make a journey. It has much in common with the desire to climb a mountain simply because it's there. In Barclay we see this desire unclouded by additional excuses such as exploration, discovering new flora and fauna, noting tribal customs or making dramatic films.

The difference between a visitor or traveller and an explorer or expedition leader is made quite clear if one compares Barclay with St John. Everything is in stark contrast.

"I had no precise intentions, no deadlines and nobody to meet."

The most obvious difference is in style. One cannot imagine Spenser St John, or even Harrison, writing: "Chunks of pig fat. Ugh!", "I need a pee" or "I think that the quickest way to judge a town is by the quality of its whores." "The sight of the large slices of pork, replete as they were with commodious accretions of fat, did not commend itself to my stomach," might be closer to their style. Peeing and whores would be unlikely to be mentioned even in euphemism.

Barclay's style is very much that of the new journalism - immediate, personal and colloquial. "A man's fighting cock is his pride and joy and it is a common jibe of wives to complain about their husbands' attachment to their cocks. I apologise for any ambiguity." (p18) Here and there are hints of a past style in the beginnings of his paragraphs "Thus fortified..." "How satisfactory..." "Furthermore...". But phrases such as "I had primed the driver to this effect" (p27) are almost immediately followed by "Snoozing on the roof" or "Well, here goes..."

In one respect, perhaps, Barclay shows a remarkable similarity to St John - and in an area one would least expect: his attitude to economic activity. "...and could any profitable agricultural industry be introduced among them, they would soon expand their energies in money making" (St John, p71) "This is a craft that is dying out fast...it's a pity because these blankets are popular when offered for sale near the coast and, if organized, making them could become a profitable side industry." (Barclay, p36)

One of the characteristics of more recent writers such as Barclay is their reproduction of conversations in direct speech. Earlier writers tend to use less dialogue and, where they do, to use reported speech or summaries of whole conversations. Unless the writers are using some technique of recording conversations as they happen, it must be a fictionalized version which Barclay and others produce. The conversations, for example his exchanges with officialdom in Belaga, may be recollected in tranquillity but without, presumably, accuracy.

Barclay has fewer accounts of conversation than, say, O'Hanlon or Gersi, because he is travelling alone much of the time, or with companions with whom he has no language in common.

Barclay can approach the lyricism of his predecessors, when he is so moved. "An exhilarating sense of freedom is inescapable, surrounded by unexploited nature as far as the eye can see. The significance of the monumental drawbacks in living in such an environment confronts one squarely, but still it fails to detract from the soul stirring serenity of the scene. A longing to exist in a form of suspended animation, bathing in the warmth of the sun and coolness of the water, forever floating downstream in a landscape of complete harmony, enveloped me as our boat drifted silently along. The hours flicked drowsily by in pleasant meditation, and never did I find the day too long or uncomfortable while travelling downstream on Ulu rivers by canoe." (p101)

Typical of the new journalism, Barclay rarely relates anything which does not impinge directly upon him. As such, the book is real travel writing, with no pretensions to scholarship. There is little of the Victorian and post-Victorian need to collect, categorize, define, explain and list. His concessions to academic foundations are his sweep through Borneo's history - not a bad nine page summary, though taking a number of things for granted - and a chapter on Customs and Legends which is curiously like the sort of chapters common in earlier writing. As such it stands out from the rest of the book and can indeed be read separately or not at all, without affecting the narrative.

Barclay's approach is as understated as any of the early explorer-writers but more noticeably "laid back" and honest. His obvious interest in the native girls is treated with candour, as is his fondness for borak and whisky and his dislike of those longhouses smitten by Christianity.

"The clothes debate is the saddest of them all. Their work and frugal eating give them magnificent, shining-skinned, bamboo-coloured bodies. Clad only in a loin cloth they have great dignity; but in their ill-fitting mixture of garments, ragged and rotting with sweat, they look much like a colony of gypsies. ...The Borneo Evangelical Mission had done their work well on this longhouse. Instead of borak drinking and dancing, there was a long prayer session." (p66)

He is equally honest about his physical weaknesses and makes no pretence of being a hero. Prior to a Kayan wrestling match, Barclay sees his intended opponent "a gnarled brute"...

"I can't fight him," I protested.

"Just try, lah."

"Quick, bring a parang, take my head now ... he had merely staged an exhibition bout; at any point he could have flicked me rolling over and over in the slimy mud." (p75)

The contrasts with the writers we considered in Chapter 2 are plain, but how far does Barclay match or depart from that original model?

He has no official backing and, although running the expedition, is in charge of little apart from himself. Unlike the explorer-writers, the lack of precise intentions, deadlines and people to meet is a marked contrast.

Moreover, there is no retinue of servants and no boats full of baggage. He shows no sign of any superiority to the people of Borneo nor of any innate conviction of the rightness of what he is doing. Though he holds some strong prejudices - against organized religion and against communism - he does not believe that what he is doing will benefit mankind.

He is humbler, more tolerant and yet at the same time more selfish than our model. He is making a personal journey and recording his personal reactions and observations.

We do, as a result, get a greater sense of *what it was like to be there* from Barclay than we do from St John or Enriquez. On the other hand, we perhaps learn less about the country through which he travels. We gain on feelings but we lose on facts.

Redmond O'Hanlon: *Into the Heart of Borneo*

O'Hanlon doesn't feel it necessary to state a motive or an excuse. Certainly he doesn't make one explicit. Though there is some talk of trying to get to Batu Tiban to find the Bornean rhino, there is no attempt to erect this into a full-scale goal.

The style of O'Hanlon has much in common with that of Barclay. Again, it is immediate, personal and colloquial. If he uses "arse" it isn't because he doesn't know words like "apparition". Bodily functions are described fairly baldly, but so are flora and fauna, customs and companions. This is one of the more lyrical passages:

"Perhaps because the water was clearer, perhaps because it foamed whiter on its way through the rocks at the pool margins, perhaps because the sunlight was more dazzling, or maybe just because we were happier - the black head of this particular kingfisher seemed a richer velvet black than that of all the others we had seen; his bill and feet looked newly made, a brilliant carmine-red; his rounded chest and belly and the collar at his neck glowed with a more intense fire of orange and yellow and chestnut; and the feathers on his back and tail caught the sun with a greater medley of changing, dancing purples and blues." A more evocative description than any likely to be found in any bird-watcher's handbook. (p108)

There is more sense of observed detail in O'Hanlon than in Barclay. Details of flora and fauna, activities such as the minutiae of erecting the bivouacs, of conversation and most noticeably, of thought, reaction and reflection.

O'Hanlon is not knowledgeable in the Cambridge Expedition sense, but he is constantly referring to his copy of *Smythies Birds of Borneo* with the eagerness of the real enthusiast, sharing his learning with the reader as he proceeds. There is also a very impressive bibliography, suggesting that he and his companion the poet James Fenton read up on the subject beforehand in a fairly earnest way. The knowledge he has gained he carries lightly, though he refers to previous explorers like Beccari and Hose as he goes along.

Like Barclay, O'Hanlon reproduces conversation as if it had been recorded word for word.

"Redmon," said Leon, when we sat down again, "you so big, your feet too far from your head."

"That's it. That's exactly what it is."

There was a pause.

"Or maybe," said Leon, "you so fats you can't see them."

Leon, with gross bad manners, uncrossed his legs, lay flat out on the floor, and laughed at his own joke, re-directing his attention, sharply, only when the unmarried girls stood up.

Gracefully, shyly, the young girls aligned themselves.

"Look at that one," said Leon. "Look at that one in the pink sarong. Redmon. Just look at that one."

"Behave yourself," I said, testily. "This is no time for one of your jumps. You'll get us all killed."

"She the moon in the sky," said Leon."

There are many conversations reported at greater length than this. All of them are convincing and many are extremely amusing. One can only surmise how O'Hanlon recollected these exchanges. The following would have stuck more easily in his memory: "The *sebarau* was tasteless, which did not matter, and full of bones, which did. It was like a hairbrush caked in lard. James had made the same discovery. "Redmond, don't worry," he whispered, "if you need a tracheotomy I have a biro-tube in my baggage."

The aptly recalled or reconstructed conversations, O'Hanlon's reflections on what has been experienced and observed and his self-deprecating narration of mistakes and embarrassments mark this chronicle out from most of the others, even Barclay's, though it shares much with that account. The effect is to produce an account which is amusing, convincing and readable.

The introductory chapters do their best to highlight the dangers and difficulties which might be encountered but once the expedition is under way surprisingly little attention is given to the more sensational aspects. Head-hunting is hardly mentioned. O'Hanlon does dwell lovingly on the problems caused by insects and other pests, especially leeches, which have a special place in most travellers' descriptions.

The book contains some of the best descriptions of character of any of the travel books of this area which we have encountered so far. The only rival is Malcolm MacDonald. This is perhaps because of the feelings of genuine friendliness between the travellers and Leon, Inghai and Dana. There is no sense of patronage, as one gets in St. John or of "How sweet these

savages can be and how loyal old so-and-so was" as in Enriquez. O'Hanlon never says how he views his Iban companions; it isn't necessary: the sense of comradeship comes through in the narrative.

O'Hanlon draws few conclusions, makes few generalizations. They would be out of place.

As we have remarked, O'Hanlon has much in common with Barclay and many of the differences which do exist are to do with the fact that Barclay travelled alone and O'Hanlon has a colleague as well as local companions he has gained. Aside from the help gained from the army before they set off, they have no official backing and no retinue of coolies. Like Barclay, they have "no precise intentions, no deadlines and nobody to meet." O'Hanlon has fewer prejudices than Barclay but a similar lack of any feeling of superiority to the people he meets. Fenton and he are, again, making a personal journey for personal reasons, and do not maintain that they are inspired by any higher motives.

Guy Piazzini: *The Children of Lilith*

Piazzini makes the reason for his expedition explicit. "I had been given the taste for this sort of thing by a previous journey of exploration in West Africa; ever since my return in 1953, I had dreamed continually of setting out once more towards the lure of unknown horizons and unexplored territories."

The following paragraph makes his motivation even clearer.

"My choice fell on Borneo. In Africa, even in South America, the blank patches so beloved of the old atlas makers, those fascinating areas marked *terra incognita* and decorated with little drawings of fabulous animals, were now slowly but surely being filled in. Though Borneo is a vast island, on the other hand, only its coastal strip has been properly explored and colonized; the central plateaux are still to all intents and purposes unknown. The only means of communication through this terrain are several rivers, three to four hundred miles in length, and abounding in rapids. To journey up them takes several months. The island is covered with enormous stretches of impenetrable jungle, where odd kinds of animal lurk and certain curious and elusive tribes have their homes." The unknown and the dangerous are the two key elements. It is interesting, though, that for all the dramatic appeal to the explorer, "abounding in rapids, impenetrable jungle, odd kinds of animal lurk" he doesn't mention headhunters. So far, though, he has much in common with the previous two writers.

When he tries to justify his desires further, he is on less sure ground.

"Hitherto no explorer or ethnologist had been able to make a thorough study of these primitive peoples. Apart from a few travellers' tales and missionaries' reports, the libraries can only offer one a collection of facile clichés on the subject. The Dyaks, we are told, are headhunters, while the Punan nomads are a highly elusive tribe, much given to hunting wild boar. But one asks, where do they come from? What do they *do*, how does their way of life work out in detail? ...have they managed to preserve a culture and civilization of their own? Have their traditional beliefs stood up to the impact...of Western influences? Such were some of the problems that I was determined to elucidate." (p12-13)

One can only ponder on the paucity of resources in Piazzini's libraries. By the 1950s the range of information on the whole spectrum of Bornean peoples was vast. As he proceeds, we suspect that this ethnological motive is indeed not so much an excuse as a deception, albeit a self-deception.

"It was only now we were approaching our real goal - the investigation of a primitive society, the re-establishment of contact with early civilization. ...we wanted to go back behind this synthetic, grimacing facade (i.e. pseudo-western culture) and discover what remained of that legendary land, the real Borneo."

His enthusiasm seems real enough. The proof, however, would be in the actual research and of that there is painfully little. Piazzini is no more an ethnographer than Barclay, and shows no more understanding than Clutterbuck or Miller.

Resting one day amidst the tribes he has come to study, he writes, "Nothing left for us to do except sit and wait for the major diplomatic event ..." Can one imagine a real anthropologist having nothing to do in such a situation? (p108)

Elsewhere he describes cannon "dating back to the Spanish conquest" and blunderbusses dating back to the "Portuguese conquest". These startling finds are followed by an estimation of the total population of the Punan as three hundred. No one who was a serious ethnographer or anthropologist would be so far out on such basic facts.

The mission of discovery, however self-deluding, certainly affects Piazzini's style. "We had to press on further; the land up-river beckoned us like a mirage. It was a leap into the past, behind all history, a venture into bygone ages." (p81) There are echoes of Charles Miller more melodramatic flights here. One suspects that the romantic image of the danger and the unknown has clouded judgement, at least when it came to writing up the account of the journey.

Even when he is not wound up with his historic mission, Piazzini tends to be overwrought. "(The jungle) chokes you, it broods over you like an old hen, it wraps you about with a shroud of steamy fecundity, as hot and suffocating as a steam bath." Or: "And always there was that damp steamy humidity, rising up from the humus-laden ground, passing through a

fantastic green world which contained every shade and tone from tender viridian to sombre olive, soft silk or gun-metal grey..." (p103)

Is it simply Latin sensibilities which lead him to compose passages such as this? "We sat and listened (to Kenyah girls singing) feeling that sense of peace and reverence which any pure, simple expression of life's essential mystery will always evoke. Something in me took wing, and the melody possessed me utterly, casting its spell over my emotions. I barely stifled a crazy urge to shout out loud, make any noise that would take me into the circle and make me part of that hypnotic rhythm." (p107)

Elsewhere, his style is very colloquial. "Obviously beads, you will say. Yes, indeed; but what sort of beads?" (p17) or "It nearly made me throw up to see one of them plunge his whole head into the same buffalo's ripped up belly..." (p45) His language is as blunt as Barclay's or O'Hanlon's "Our Dyaks sang their native songs, to an unrestrained accompaniment of farts and belches. It was an odd sort of concert, but they all fairly burst themselves trying to give of their best - at both ends." (p91)

In spite of the sentimentality, lyricism and naive enthusiasm, there is a calmness of tone in much of the book. And while there is little humour (he takes himself too seriously) the tone as a whole is good-humoured. Had he admitted like Barclay that he just wanted a stroll through Borneo or somewhere to have boyish adventure, the whole narrative would be more acceptable and enjoyable.

Given Piazzini's delusions, it is ironic to hear him describing one of his comrades thus. "Bourdalon ... was playing up the blase explorer act for all he was worth ... I guessed from the expression he put on that he was seeing himself as the Great Traveller of his dreams..." (p71)

The other members of the expedition are Pierre Pfeffer, a zoologist, George Bourdalon, a cine photographer, and Pierre Heise, a "professional traveller-cum-tourist". An odd selection! "I was to be in command of the expedition" remarks Piazzini, causing us no surprise.

As the journey which lasts a year progresses, there are fewer references to its ostensible purpose and as it nears its end its success *as an adventure* becomes clear.

Piazzini combines a number of points of view which we have encountered already. There is the affection for the Bornean people described by many of the writer-explorers, especially for the Punan "We very soon developed a strong feeling of sympathy and affection for these indigent, nervous, courageous little men whom the Dyaks referred to as savages" (p155) and "...from my point of view, the notions of these people, which he considered primitive and backward, were just as valuable as those of any Christian." (p110) There is the attraction to the women with whom he claims close friendship and to whom he jokingly proposes. (There is no hint of sexual encounters but he is obviously attracted to the "young Dyak girl with her warm complexion, huge dark eyes, and flowered sarong." (p179) And there is the egalitarian attitude of Barclay and O'Hanlon, although sometimes it has a rather self-advertising touch to it: "Every time we were obliged to travel on one of these KPM boats, it took a great deal of persistence on our part to get deck passages. In Indonesia no European ever travels in so primitive a fashion; and the booking clerk would invariably tell us that he couldn't allow us to travel deck-class. We would then complain to the captain; if he proved unsympathetic, we would threaten to lodge a complaint with the Indonesian authorities. Thanks to these threats, which got us into the good books of the Indonesians themselves..."

In common with Barclay and O'Hanlon, too, Piazzini does not revel in the discomforts of jungle life. Like so many others before and after, though, he cannot ignore the leeches.

"As I was marching along through the jungle, a warm, wet, sensation in one foot made me suddenly strip off my shoe. I swallowed back the burst of bad-tempered irritation which assailed me when I saw that the whole foot was soaked in blood. A nest of leeches had burrowed in between my toes. This only came as a partial surprise, however: the whole jungle, I knew, was infested by these filthy creatures, which wriggled under one's clothes and painlessly sucked one's blood. ...if you wear trousers you can't see them climbing up your legs, with the result that they get into your groin and sometimes even penetrate the anus - an especially dangerous contingency." (p143)

Though full of anecdote and direct speech, details of way of life are almost completely absent - except for a description of the feast of the severed head - and that is all description with no reflection or analysis.

Piazzini encounters Borneo with his melodramatic or romantic notions occupying his mind. "Impenetrable jungle..."(p13) "the edge of the unknown" (p72) - the language which Osa Johnson was prone to use. The following is a typical example: "When we first saw the coastline of Borneo spring up in silhouette through the light sea mist, I experienced that feeling of uneasiness which always steals through you at the imminent fulfilment of a long cherished dream. Borneo was the marvellous island which I associated with the cut-out paper maps of childhood: was this island now about to surrender the key to its mysteries to me?" (p60)

Unlike Osa Johnson, however, Piazzini's emotions have undergone a change. He is still romantic and sentimental but his Borneo of the imagination has been replaced by a reality. *Travel has broadened his mind.*

"The marshy estuary of the Kayan," reads his final paragraph, "dotted with floating islands, faded into the purplish evening haze. We said goodbye at last to our Dyak crews - the final link still binding us to the past. These men had brought us down to the coast without a single hitch or accident, despite the dangers which threatened us at every instant of the trip down-river. In their eyes too, at the moment of parting, I was moved to see an emotion that transcends all barriers of race or creed: the sadness of friends who must go their separate ways." (p192)

If we go back to our penultimate paragraph on Barclay, we will find that the conclusions can be restated almost word for word. Piazzini's prejudices are against the Dutch colonial system rather than against communism and Christianity, and he tries to dress up the fact that he is making a personal journey and recording his personal reactions and observations inside pseudo-academic clothing - but these are the only substantial differences.

Although the expedition comprises five members, together with local assistance, it is still a small entourage compared to that of the explorers. In spite of the author's declarations, the trip has far more in common with Barclay and O'Hanlon than with Harrisson or Hose.

Of the accounts considered so far in this section, Barclay's gives the best impression of what it was like to be there, even allowing for what has been lost in translation in Piazzini's account. They all share a relaxed, egalitarian ethos and an easy-going journalistic style.

Pierre Ivanoff: *Headhunters of Borneo*

Ivanoff's relatively brief account of his expedition makes a good comparison with Piazzini, Barclay and O'Hanlon. The Publisher's Foreword makes some extravagant claims at the outset.

"An expedition that was different from the start. Its members ... decided that their best chances of finding out what they wanted to know was to "go native" as completely as possible; and they did ... and they learned the truth about many things - including headhunting! Their aims were chiefly ethnological..." (Publisher's Foreword)

Ethnological or not, there is little explanation of the trip's origins or its backing. Instead, we are told, "Distance no longer counts in this modern age. Once the financial difficulties have been settled and the bureaucratic obstacles overcome, it is child's play to get to the antipodes - or wherever else you like". (p9)

It seems to be important to the writer that it is a French undertaking, ("The French expedition to Borneo was now indisputable fact") and there is clearly official assistance of some kind, which helps to provide the two tons of equipment, the guides and the twenty "coolies".

The party, it transpires, has five members, including Andre Martin who had spent several years "in darkest Africa", Frantz Laforest, an "impassioned archaeologist" (and member of Franco-Venezuelan Orinoco Expedition) and Raymond de Seynes - a taxidermist.

According to Ivanoff, they chose Borneo "because of its geographical importance (its area is twice as big as that of France) and its immense and unexplored forests - and also in the hope of finding some indications of the passage of the Polynesians". This last is a reference to the recent Kon Tiki expedition. They are also interested in following the route of a French explorer, Charles Muller, who disappeared in Borneo in the first half of the 19th Century. An interesting mixture of motives.

In spite of the "ethnological research", there is no bibliography or index; like Piazzini, Ivanoff is very unacademic in his

approach: "The Dyak tribes, ethnically unmixed [how does he know?] headhunters and nomadic tillers of the soil, were untouched by civilization as we know it. It was therefore incumbent on us to find out all we could about their beliefs, their social laws, their technological skills, and so on. We also wanted to discover whether headhunting still existed, and to find out all we could about the rites connected with it." This *could* be rewritten from a thesis or a research document - but is it? It seems unlikely.

"By this time [i.e. far on in their journey] we knew how to behave ourselves in minor matters..." Unfortunately, no details (or even a general sense) of this learning process about local behaviour and culture have been recorded.

The middle section of book does contain some description of the life and ways in some detail for the general reader (in other words, the narrative is suspended) but it is more like Barclay's chapter on Bornean history than the investigations of a scholar and includes a rather neutral description of Dyak beliefs which concludes, "Thus from the cradle to the grave the Dyak is surrounded by a great number of invisible powers."

This, then, is a slight book without the charm of O'Hanlon or the power of Domalain (see below). Given the statement of the publisher in the foreword and the claims of the writer, the account is a disappointment. It sets out to recount the exploits of an exploration but in the event tells the story of an only mildly interesting adventure. The loss of equipment in the river is (it seems) an occupational hazard with such expeditions; the illness of one of the members requiring his return to hospital down-river is less common. Even so, there is little to entertain (or educate) the reader either in style (O'Hanlon's strongest point) or content, whether that be thrills and spills (as in Domalain or Gersi) or the careful observation of the new and unusual.

It shares Piazzini's spurious academic motivation but in other ways is unlike the previous accounts in this section. The expedition itself is quite large and must presumably have had some official backing. The tone, though, is nondescript and there is none of the sense of involvement which comes through in Barclay, O'Hanlon and Piazzini.

J-Y Domalain: *Panjamon!*

One could not say that there is nothing to entertain the reader in Panjamon - or that there is a lack of involvement! Nor does the writer maintain any spurious scholarly goals. He isn't even, it would seem, a traveller. He doesn't like travelling! "Travel for travel's sake, is to my mind, a waste of time and energy and an unnecessary expense. It is so much better to arrive". We can take that statement with a pinch of salt.

J-Y Domalain writes that his reason for travelling is to "view animals". He wanted to go to Indonesia to see, among other things, the Komodo lizard. The Malaysian Confrontation stopped this so he went to Borneo instead - one of the few travellers for whom Borneo has been a second choice.

By way of research, he "browsed through a number of ethnographical works", presumably in the library at Kuching, and made "copious notes" on the Kenyahs. He then set off alone to reach their territory. There is something of the impetuosity of Barclay in this; actions of great significance resting (as it seems) on a whim. Later, he decides to find out about head-hunting in the Ulu Batang Rajang. "(According to officials) the natives had given up the practice of headhunting; but some people maintained the contrary to be true. The best thing was to go and find out for myself."

The narrative goes straight into action. By page two we are well into the jungle. He carries a hammock, a gun (surely illegally) and a pet monkey. He shoots his dinner and dries the monkey meat (not the pet) for later.

About all this he is surprisingly matter of fact: "... there were dozens of little streams running into the estuary, necessitating a detour to find a crossing. However, a few 100 yards from camp I saw two bands of monkeys quarrelling. I crept forward, getting covered in mud, and approached near enough to an imprudent male to shoot it." (p2)

"I made many notes and took many photos, but I suffered a lot from the mosquitos and the rain ... I began to feel ill, and the thought of going down with malaria in this isolated spot was not amusing."

Anecdotes are foreshortened and direct speech not always used where one might expect. For example, "the only casualty had been a hen squashed by a fat woman. Its owner, a wrinkled old lady, did not intend to let the matter rest there. Who was going to pay for her chicken? Finally, the Chinese agent gave her half its price and added it to the supplies for our midday meals." (p6)

Domalain's laid-back approach is apparent on every page: "You begin to get your eye in after capturing a dozen or so," he confides about the catching of snakes. (p14) Or on a jungle diet: "I stayed sitting on the ground; my back was hurting so much that I dared not venture into the forest. A branch or a creeper brushing against my spine made me grit my teeth, and I did not move about much that day. In any case, it was soon dark, and the three of us huddled together to keep warm, after swallowing a few handfuls of insects and some fern shoots. We ate it all raw - the insects alive. I was the first time I had done that." (p18)

Domalain, like Barclay, Piazzini and O'Hanlon, does not remain on the edge of society and observe. He joins in with a vengeance whether the events involve food, drink or women. "... without going in to details I can report that love-making among the Kayans is a very pleasant experience and that the desire to perform well is aided by a technique which surprised and delighted me." The rest is discreet silence. (p44) Indeed, "The women are very beautiful..." but he is appreciative of the people as a whole. "They are handsome men with a fine bearing and a natural ease of movement, full of laughter and with an enjoyment of life difficult to imagine. They are brave and proud, hospitable, generous and intelligent." (p31) One more telling contrast to the opinions of the likes of Clutterbuck.

He is positive in most of his comments about the people he encounters. He makes a few generalizations about tribal groups - "In short, it can be said that the Kayans constitute the intellectual and artistic elite of the Borneo tribes" - but overall he is restrained in such opinions. (p39) He is aware that his knowledge prior to his expedition was limited and he appears eager to learn. In his subsequent trip he certainly does so.

Domalain's second trip up country to Iban country involves him in more than he bargained for. After a disagreement with his boatman, he becomes lost in the jungle. ("The tropical forest has nothing beautiful about it; it is just dreadful.") His

description is forceful and convincing, conveying the arduousness of the journey while not making any particular claims for himself. "Even today I can't explain my reactions and decisions in the heart of that jungle. I can only think I must have been slightly off my rocker, with a good deal of fatalism as well. It would be difficult to write in detail about that fortnight in the jungle and still more to describe my feelings. You need to know the Borneo climate, the jungle and everything connected with it - the cold and the rain, the heat, fatigue and loneliness. I don't claim that the crossing of those mountains was a great feat ... By the end of a fortnight I was completely done in. I hardly had the strength to sling my hammock - it would have been so much easier just to stretch out on the ground. My morale must have been at a low ebb, for after all, a fortnight alone, even walking for 7 or 8 hours a day, was no great exploit. Many men have done as much and in far worse conditions, yet there I was feeling lost and at the end of my tether." (p67)

Eventually he finds a village. Having intended the trip to be a reconnaissance, he in fact stays and stays. "My easy going nature decided for me - I would stay another fortnight." After some dalliance with local girls he finds he has asked for the chief's daughter in marriage. He decides the easiest solution is to go through with it. The reader cannot fail to be impressed - we are either in the hands of a true adventurer or a great (tall) story-teller.

Domalain quickly adopts Iban customs. His previous experiences, for example, being able to track and kill his own food, obviously assist him. He learns to hunt the Iban way and joins in with enjoyment... "I loved these days outings and the picnics on the sandy bank, under the big trees." (p102)

Three months go by. "It was a hard life but easy to bear" - except for the initiation, which it seems he was lucky to survive, *and* the tattooing...

His experiences allow an insight into aspects of life which would otherwise not be communicated so graphically. "The tattoos for the initiation and my family status had taken more than 60 hours. This one and the next - making 7 designs in all - would take about 120 hours ... A well decorated warrior must have spent about 600 hours - say 50 days - of his life under the needle." (p127)

"The days slipped past, one often like another but rarely dull. It must not be thought that life among the Ibans is one long round of fantastic adventures, countless dangers and one accident after another. Admittedly the unexpected probably occurs more often than it does in the life of a ticket puncher or an office clerk, but certainly not frequently enough to supply material for an adventure serial. In the first place one gets used to the unexpected; and at the time it does not seem so important or of such an adventurous nature as when thinking or writing about it later."

"I looked through my notebook occasionally and found entries such as "That fool palak has fallen out of a tree and fractured his tibia..." "It's a week since anyone killed a boar, and I'm getting fed up with a diet of bamboo shoots. I'd give anything for a good steak."" (p127)

There is no shortage of sensational material, however, including an account of head-taking described at one remove - the author was not in the ambush party - and snake-catching which nearly ends in his death.

After all the remarkable events and the closeness to Iban life he has achieved, the writer comments, "It would take a very astute European to penetrate the workings of the Asiatic mind", a statement not so far from those of a century previous. "We weren't on the same wavelength nor did the same things spur us on. But the basic problem was simply that they were yellow and primitive while I was white and civilized." (p160)

Finally, homesickness brought on by an attempted poisoning by a jealous witch-doctor spurs him to leave, in fact to run away. (The explorer as runaway: a new category...)

His last paragraph reads: "It was a beautiful river, the Natibas river, and there was an Iban village on it, but one where the inhabitant wore shirts and some of them could even answer "Yes" to questions. In the evening there was a celebration, with dances! I was safe at last.

"That's my daughter," the old chief said to me. "Isn't she pretty?"

"Na badas. Oh no, she's not at all pretty!"

This being the way that he was ensnared before, Domalain ends his account with this echo, perhaps even inventing the last conversation for the sake of a neat ending.

In analysing Domalain, it is easy to see that he does not fit in the same mould as the traditional explorers. No backing of any kind as far as one can judge, no companions, no luggage apart from that which he carries on his back. He has few decided opinions and his attitudes are far from benign paternalism! The only trait he shares with the model explorer is a confidence in himself and, like many others, determination.

He has much in common with the writers considered already in this chapter: his relaxed style (of behaviour as much as of writing), his sympathy with the people, and his enjoyment of life away from "civilization". Domalain may be seen as one extreme of this group of travellers. As we said of Barclay, "He is humbler, more tolerant and yet at the same time more selfish than our model. He is making a personal journey and recording his personal reactions and observations." Domalain is even more independent, concerned only with himself and his experiences and feeling no need to justify this or, as some of the others in this and the previous chapter do, cloak it in an excuse. Even more than Barclay, O'Hanlon or Piazzini, Domalain has "no precise intentions, no deadlines and nobody to meet." So much so that for a considerable period he doubts whether he wants to return from the expedition at all.

Andro Linklater: *Wild People*

The motives for Linklater's journey were mixed. He needed money and had a desire to go travelling again (the Himalayas or South America...) Also, "I was suffering from a cramp induced by too much journalism and I wanted to return to the wide open spaces of a book" Time Life were recruiting writers for a series called *Peoples of the Wild*, so: "I sent my name in." He didn't manage to land the Himalayas, the Amazon or the Andes but was satisfied with the consolation prize of Borneo.

He forms part of a small team, the most important of whom (at least to Time Life) seems to be the photographer, which sets off with little preparation to bring back pictures and descriptions of "People of the Wild" from deepest Borneo.

Linklater is soon in love with Sarawak. "Suddenly it seemed incredible, a thought literally beyond the compass of my imagination, that I should be in a dugout canoe, manned by Iban, cutting into the heart of the Sarawak jungle. Yet beneath my hand was the hard reality of a hollowed out tree trunk, and in my eye the bronzed back of the lookout and the green of the glossy leaves turning to silver where the equatorial sun caught their surface. For most of that journey I tasted a happiness whose flavour never left me while I was in Sarawak." (p34) In this he is similar to other writers who have come with a little knowledge but with positive feelings - entranced, not to say seduced by the setting and the people.

"He could be an Iban - except for the colour of his skin.'

No flattery is more potent than to be told that you are what you secretly dream of being. For days I preened myself. I knew it was no more than politeness. I knew she should also have added, 'except for his ignorance of the language, the culture and the country' but I did not care. It felt like acceptance, and I was delighted." (p173)

The infatuation continues in spite of familiar discomforts. "My legs were scored and bleeding, and leeches clustered on my ankles and forearms, but without shoes to bind them, my feet had found their way unscathed through the spikes and thorns. For one panting moment, I felt that I had broken into the Iban world. I could not think of any advantage in the Western way of life, nor any disadvantages in the Sarawak forest." (p175)

It takes a serious accident to one of the Iban villagers to change Linklater's feelings. "Langgai's near fatal accident had brought home forcibly the advantage of Western values. It also dealt a mortal blow to my passion for the Iban way. In the choice between modern and traditional, divided and unitary, the balance had swung the other way. Put crudely, I felt that the availability of painkillers was worth more than a night of love." (p192)

As the extract above suggests, Linklater is as seduced by the Iban women as he is by their country. "Above their sarongs their breasts and shoulders were smooth and honey-coloured, and their long black hair was tied back in chignons to reveal high cheek bones and neat features." (p70) He lingers on the delights of the appearance of Iban women, is captivated by a longhouse girl called Aching, and subsequently by any girl looking his way. That he doesn't enter into a relationship with any of them is not for want of trying.

He doesn't take himself too seriously, however. The quote above continues: "I was a drifting voyeur until one of the lovely washerwomen saw me ... They swung round towards me, and the sight of a pink faced seal provoked a burst of merriment." (p70) In the Acknowledgements he remarks, "This account is written as comedy because no other vein was suitable to the intensity and debacle of our expedition." In fact, the book is no more comic than most of the others in this section but the statement reveals an interesting self-perception.

The debacle referred to occurs when, after much difficulty and disagreement within the party, they discover that Time-Life has cancelled plans for the People of the Wild series. Nevertheless, "When it came to saying goodbye ... all other feelings were washed away by misery. The affection I had felt had deepened so gradually that until then I had hardly been aware of it. From being a community to be studied they had become intimates from whom it was painful to depart." (p202) Once again, a familiar refrain.

Linklater's description is direct and active with a lot of direct speech. Only rarely do we realise that all of the speech has had to be translated for him. Even more seldom is the recognition that everything is being recorded in his notebook. "There were 35 women crammed into the apartment - at some point in the

next hour I must have counted them, for the figure is entered in my notebook in a straggling hand..." (p169)

The central part of the book is taken up with the Gawai Kenyalang celebration/ceremony - great details of which are recollected, even those which end in total inebriation: "...Sometime later I can remember a girl singing me a praise song and her features behaved like a kaleidoscope. Her ears multiplied round the rim of her face, her mouth split into a dozen different orifices, and a necklace of eyes circled her nose which swelled and shrank with each note of her song." (p107)

He is good at entertaining thumbnail sketches of the many longhouse characters - a little superficial, slightly sentimental but never facile. For example, "Before I knew Jingga's name, I had identified him in my journal as 'Paul Schofield playing Lear'. He was admittedly shorter and fatter than Schofield, but he had the actor's resonant voice, his crisp, wavy hair and, allowing for an overlay of flesh, his chiselled features. The heavy build and some greyness in the hair gave him a slow-moving dignity, and despite fleshy, sensual lips his face conveyed a tragic quality as though he were beset by secret cares." (p72)

Apart from the existence of a powerful commercial backer, Linklater has much in common with the preceding accounts in this section. Although there is a distinct and pressing purpose to the expedition, it was undertaken on a whim out of an underlying desire to travel *anywhere*. His style of writing and of life is relaxed and open; he is humble, tolerant and sympathetic to the people on whom the party is intruding. In spite of his ignorance of the local language, his lack of experience and the avowedly light-hearted approach to the writing of the book, Linklater's reflections on Iban life, the imminence of the outside world and the future read as the words of a thoughtful and serious man.

Eric Hansen: *Stranger in the Forest*

Eric Hansen, too, is a thoughtful and serious man and like Linklater he also falls in love with the country in a way which is half real and half romantic imagination.

Part of the attraction is the difficulty that a journey through Borneo would involve. "The allure of Borneo grew in stages. One of the principal attractions of the central highlands of Kalimantan was its inaccessibility" (p29-30). His aim "was to cross the island, following old trade routes, collecting jungle products and medicinal plants of value, and exchanging these and western goods for what I needed. The concept was a masterful piece of scholarly lunacy based on anachronistic information and my own half baked notions of Sarawak that had been gleaned from a twelve day drunken visit six years earlier."

He quotes from *The Oblivion Seekers* by Isabelle Eberhardt where she is writing about the freedom and desire to travel. She wonders how some people can be satisfied with familiar surroundings: "Not to feel the torturing need to know and see for oneself what is there, beyond the mysterious blue wall of the horizon, not to find the arrangements of life monotonous and depressing, to look at the white road leading off into the unknown distance without feeling the imperious necessity of giving in to it and following it obediently across mountains and valleys! ... There are limits to every domain, and laws to govern every organized power. But *the vagrant owns the whole vast earth* that ends only at the non-existent horizon, and his empire is an intangible one, for his domination and enjoyment of it are things of the spirit." (p43-44; my italics)

This extract, together with his comments reveal much about his and other travellers motivations. "Isabelle was right about there being no destinations. Travel is the act of leaving familiarity behind. Destination is a mere by-product of the journey. I guess what I wanted from my journey was a unique experience, something so far beyond my comprehension that I would have to step completely out of my skin to understand and become part of my surroundings." (p44) Eberhardt and Hansen reinforce what we have maintained many times already, that travel is an end in itself. Some travellers (or tramps, or *vagrants*) have needed an official motive - if for no

other reason than securing support and sponsorship - some, the more recent ones, have not seen the need for an excuse.

The contrast with earlier travellers is made by Hansen himself. "A. W. Nieuwenhuis, 2 associates, and 110 porters and bodyguards had preceded me to succeed in crossing the island but that had been in 1897, and it had taken them a year. Certainly some local people and perhaps even some Westerners have crossed the island. There are many stories, but the point of my trip was not to be the first, or the fastest, or the straightest. The challenge was to do it alone, to make myself completely vulnerable, and to be changed by the environment." The desires to travel alone, and more especially to be vulnerable are also more recent phenomena. Nor can one imagine St. John or Tillema expressing the wish to be changed by their environment. If any changes were to take place, it would be in the indigenous inhabitants or in the environment itself. That is not to say that the Victorian explorers and their early twentieth century counterparts were not changed by their experiences. What is interesting are the changes in perception and intention which have taken place. Hansen is the most explicit but most of the writers considered in this chapter would, I believe, understand and sympathize with his desires.

The desires to be alone, to understand and to adapt are all connected. "Traveling on my own was the only way to see what the people were like. I had consciously put myself in a position where I was the one who had to adapt - both to the people and to the environment". (p144)

Hansen, like many other contemporary traveller is self-aware. He sees himself - as if from a plane - "seated by a campfire with two brownskin jungle men, speaking an unknown language. Nearby lay the steaming carcass of a wild boar. From that perspective I suddenly realized what an astonishing situation I was in: submerged in a sea of giant trees, hunting wild animals, a bloodied parang at my waist - the stuff of pure fantasy six months earlier." (p161-2)

Again, "I was the outsider, the ignorant one. With their unique forms of architecture, social organization and sophisticated farming techniques, they have established themselves in an incredibly difficult environment. ... I stopped being the observer and began to accept their supernatural world, and my journey was never the same. In that single moment I grew much closer to my experiences." (p192) Together with the self-

analysis goes another of the common strands associated with these later travellers: a positive, often humble, attitude towards the indigenous population.

The humble traveller, the vulnerable Westerner... together with these roles Hansen develops another rarer though not unknown character, the European as Fool. "By making a complete fool of myself the night before I had shown trust in the good nature of these people. I had made myself vulnerable to ridicule, and they had loved it. The only white men these people knew were either Christian missionaries or European geologists. I was something else." (p83) Hansen is only doing what outsiders had been doing for years when visiting longhouse celebrations. Even the more staid explorers had to get up to dance from time to time and though they may not have recorded it, one suspects that they made fools of themselves too. MacDonald was adept at putting on a show and plenty of the travellers described in this chapter, O'Hanlon, for example, were capable of becoming court jesters after some bowls of arak. Hansen simply goes a little further by both throwing himself wholeheartedly into making an exhibition of himself and also making his role of Fool explicit to the readers .

In spite of his closeness to the people with whom he travels and those he stays with along the way, Hansen is aware of his personal isolation and of the distance between their cultures. "I had chosen to come...but that did not dissipate the sense that I was isolated in a place that wasn't my own. ... I felt I had become fluent enough in Indonesian, but the cultural gap between my Western middle class background and that of these two nomadic hunters had come to feel like a sociological Grand Canyon. The three of us had experienced so many intimate, humorous, touching moments, but I knew I didn't really matter to them. We were physically together but separated by our histories, thoughts, perceptions and expectations." (p161-2)

Hansen's perceptive comments on his own situation are matched by a clear narrative style. He excels in neat accurate details. "That distinctive S E Asian smell of dried fermented prawns and sumpoil." (p16)

"Through my mosquito net I could see a rooster, perched on a low window sill, crowing small puffs of steam into the crisp morning air." (p179)

There is some fascinating detail on barter trade with an extensive list of equivalents beginning with "1 mok dry rice = 1 meal for 1 man; 15 moks = 1 gantang; 60 moks = 1 kaling besar (large biscuit tin); 1 stick sugée = 4 moks rice; 5 sticks sugée = 1 bottle arak..." (p49) and his brief list of equipment makes an amusing contrast with that of Tillema. "My equipment consisted of a mosquito net, a blue-and-white cotton bedsheet, a small green ripstop nylon backpack, one change of clothes, malaria pills, a camera, and a pair of running shoes with camouflaged shoelaces..." (p63)

His descriptions of the forest are evocative but not lyrical. They are realistic rather than romantic - partly, perhaps, because he is walking through it rather than being paddled through it. "The rain forest felt magical and enchanted as long as I was sitting still but the moment I began walking it became an obstacle course of steep razorback ridges, muddy ravines, fallen trees, slippery buttressed tree roots, impenetrable thickets of undergrowth, and a confusion of wildly twisting rivers running in every direction. All of this was in the shade of the interlocking branches of giant rain-forest trees. I became disoriented. Tributary streams filled with moss green boulders cascaded into space from unseen jungle precipices, creating an eerie rising mist that filled the rain forest and kept us damp all day. In this giant greenhouse the air was saturated with the smell of damp earth and rotting vegetation." (p64)

He acquires a fund of knowledge as he travels, knowledge (of Iban plant names, the habits of animals for example) which he carries lightly, dispensing only as the narrative requires it. The narrative is well sustained, with a judicious balance of detail and generality, direct and reported conversation, the everyday and the bizarre. The curiosity of the reader is maintained through devices commonly found in fiction. Following a description of black magic, he ends "I thanked Pedera Ulan for his thoughtful advice, but I was a fool and didn't take it seriously. I always traveled with a *surat jalan* but I didn't heed the warning about black magic and jungle spirits." (p101) End of chapter!

At the end of the account, we are reminded one more time of the fact that he had "no precise intentions, no deadlines and nobody to meet." "I knew there was no welcoming committee waiting for me at the coast - no breaking the tape, no snipping the ribbon. No one, in fact, had any idea what I had just put myself through. The realization gave me a feeling of

satisfaction. I was beginning to enjoy feeling insignificant. I relished the idea that the journey had been such a private affair. No sponsorship pressures, no deadlines or obligations to anyone but myself." (p268)

This is followed by an insight into the writing-up process which is usually omitted from other accounts. "For the next few days I didn't speak to anyone. I was indexing 500 pages of journal entries. I wanted to complete that task before the memory of my journey was broken by the avalanche of distractions and mad activity that I felt approaching and perhaps I also needed to order my thoughts and impressions of the trip while ordering my pieces of paper." (p274) Presumably most other writers went through a similar process. Typically, it is Hansen who actually mentions it.

Hansen exhibits all the major characteristics of the Tramps without Excuses. He is tolerant, relaxed and sympathetic. He is also self-reliant, self-aware and self-deprecating, showing all the reflective qualities of other solitary travellers. Like Barclay and Domalain, "he is making a personal journey and recording his personal reactions and observations."

Before concluding this section, it is worth examining the accounts of Douchan Gersi and Mady Villard. Written in French, they provide some comparison with the narratives translated from French and with those written in English.

Douchan Gersi: *Borneo*

Gersi is a Belgian film-maker, accompanied by two companions, who makes a trip to Borneo with no official backing but with a certain amount of help from the Shell Company in Balikpapan. The aims of the expedition (eventually decided) are to investigate the Punan in the central plateaux and to film animals in the area of the Sangatta river.

There is a good deal of equipment, all of which is listed, with much stress on the film gear. The somewhat rambling narrative deals at length with the efforts to get the expedition under way from Samarinda. Gersi is frequently exasperated by the obstacles to his plans. There are endless negotiations with porters (in direct speech) interspersed with domestic detail and internal monologues.

As the journey is made, he discourses to the reader on many subjects, including the destruction of the forest and the wonder of the jungle. He is interested in the wildlife but not knowledgeable about it, though he has read Piazzini and Pfeffer; he sees himself very much as a film-maker-cum-reporter.

After a final disagreement with the porters and their dismissal, Gersi and his companions go it alone. They leave one of their number with the baggage and endeavour to find the correct path. Gersi and his companion then split up again. More by luck than judgement they regain "civilization" and meet up with each other. As such, it is a story of survival rather than exploration, of adventure rather than reportage:

"Avec des porteurs, des guides, c'est facile de faire ce que l'on a fait. C'est a la portee du premier touriste.
Mais maintenant nous allons vivre une veritable aventure..."

"C'est vrai, Douch, on a la chance d'etre Stanley au XXe siecle. De vivre l'Aventure!" (p27)

The Publisher's blurb highlights the sensational aspects of the journey, adventure rather than discovery: "Au plus profond de cet ocean vegetal, un point blanc sur la carte, qu'il sagit d'atteindre, territoire inviole ou vivent des coupeurs de tetes... Trois jeunes hommes blanc et neuf porteurs. Et puis, un certain jour, les trois European seuls, car les porteurs ont disparu, emportant les vivres. Alors, l'inconnu, la terreur, la solitude..."

Gersi himself is highly strung and emotional in spite of his ostensibly laid-back attitude - and his writing reflects this. His account moves from the mundane to the lyrical and on into the sentimental, pretentious and purple. In the Foreword, after a quote from Nietzsche, he stresses his love for the jungle: "... Ce recit est comme un poeme a une femme d'amour, mante religieuse superbe, femme parmi les femmes: la foret."

His style, at its more restrained, is reminiscent of the new journalism of Barclay or O'Hanlon. He makes frequent use of exclamation and non-sentences... "La chaleur moite de Djakarta. Les rues encombrees. Les cris. Les orages. Les fumees" or "Borneo!" or "Oui, l'Aventure commence." (p30)

The style becomes less restrained in his letters to his daughter (who, at the time of writing is aged one). "Je crois que j'ai l'envie pure et simple du connaitre la grande foret secrete de Borneo. La vraie foret, celle des silences et des drames, et aussi, ma fille, la joie de traverser une region inexploree. Ce terme suscite immediatement en moi mille frissons. Mon imagination feconde me fait inventer des aventures passionnantes. (p54)

Gersi's enthusiasm leads him to extensive passages along the following lines. "La nuit est tombee magnifique. Les incendies du ciel ont marque longtemps les nuages boursouffles de longues trainees colorees. Comme s'il fallait cette demarche pour garantir un retour au soleil. Une sorte de long rituel d'amour entre les espaces de lumieres et ceux des nuits profondes." Or, "The clouds puff up with heat, dark with fury, tear themselves into luminous stripes which crack like whips and roll at the bottom of giant drums". (p70)

"Je suis amoureux de toi, jungle!

C'est pour cela que je suis la. Je t'aime et te crains." (p131)

"...Une foret sans age d'ou surigaît sans etonnement un dinosaure ou un pithecanthrope." (p133)

There is much made of the Great Moment of Facing the Jungle. "Demain nous serons dans la jungle, dans la vrai jungle. Face a realite." A long way from the stiff upper-lipped explorer typified by St John or Enriquez! It is difficult to imagine even O'Hanlon telling his readers that his heart was like a crater of blood and fire. ("J'ai le coeur comme un cratere de sang et de feu.")

What Gersi has in common with the traditional explorers is merely superficial: a large amount of baggage and a number of porters - which he manages very badly. He shares the explorer's determination but in other attitudes he is far more outwardly emotional: not only more so than the early explorers but also more than those considered earlier in this section.

Gersi shares a certain amount with them - but with subtle differences. His style is relaxed - but only on the surface; he has sympathy with the people - but it quickly turns to exasperation; he enjoys life away from "civilization" - but comes to detest the jungle.

Gersi, too, is making a personal journey and recording his personal reactions and observations and is concerned only with himself and his experiences. His observations about life in Borneo, the flora and fauna and all the other myriad things which fascinate St John appear to be only of passing interest.

There are plentiful similarities to the other tramps without excuses, most especially to Domalain. The greatest difference is in the emotional style. For all its melodrama *Panjamon* is written in a somewhat matter-of-fact tone, not all of which can be due to the translation. The very active and personal prose of this book gives a feeling, not so much of what it was like to be there, but of what it was like to be Douchan Gersi being there.

Mady Villard: *Borneo - chez les hommes aux longues oreilles*

Mady Villard is a French journalist whom the cover notes describe as being one of the better specialists on the tribes of central Borneo without being an ethnologist and a regular writer about the Malay archipelago without being a journalist...

Her reasons for visiting Borneo are as intangible as Barclay's. As with others in this section, and indeed beyond it, it is the sense of adventure, the idea of the jungle, the melodramatic appeal of head-hunters. "Borneo et son mystere! Cette troisieme plus grand ile du monde, toute couverte de jungles primaires, et ses habitants: de farouches coupeurs de tetes."

"She had little money but she had time... and a character which said Presente! to the question Pourquoi pas?"

Her interest begins with a short visit. Villard works out her finances for a short stay on the coast - which will ensure that she keeps her "tete sur les epaules!" However, on the boat from Singapore to Kuching she meets a group of "indigenes" who invite her to their village. Then, while researching in Kuching, (reminding the reader of the headhunting reputation of the natives, en passant) she encounters "un jeune natif" who is a Kenyah from up the Baram river, who invites her to his family's longhouse...

Mady is adopted by the tribe of one of the contacts she has made, and particularly by Raja Maran and his wife Bala Lat Pu'un. She is involved in many ceremonies and some mild tattooing. As she becomes more at home in her Borneo environment, her references to head-hunting decrease as her enthusiasm grows.

She is much given to exclamation. "La vie se renouvelle sans cesse! Elle est fantastique, la vie!" (p19) The writing is highly personal and often emotional. "Mon coeur de dilate de joie, je suis heureuse. Je sens que je n'ai jamais ete aussi heureuse depuis longtemps. Je ne suis de nulle part; je ne l'ai jamais senti aussi fort qu'aujourd'hui." (p34)

Purple passages are not hard to find. "Toujours plus vorace, la jungle etend les branches de ses bois geants au-dessus de nous,

voute mysterieuse, pleine d'oiseaux et de papillons, qui nous protege du soleil, ce soleil qui a ete si impitoyable pendant toute la matinee." (p64)

The description is often more notable for its wonderment than its detail: "Pays magnifique, sauvage, cruel, mysterieux" and there is no academic or even organized look at flora or fauna. However, there are some fairly detailed accounts of people, costume, and dance.

In general, though, her descriptions tend to the impressionistic sweep: "Autour de nous, tout est splendeur: l'Akah se frayant un chemin a travers la jungle primitive aux arbres gigantesques, les fleurs eclatantes qui s'epanouissent dans les endroits les plus inattendus, les plantes parasites, magnifiques, qui se nourrissent des branches qu'elles etreignent, les lianes parfois grosses comme de petits arbres qui tombent dans l'eau, ou qui, a quelques metres de la surface, font d'etranges noeuds et repartent a l'assaut des sommets dont elles descendent. ... J'apercois un enorme lezard (un iguane?) de pres d'un metre de long qui se jette a l'eau a notre approche." (p69-70)

The painting of Villard's impressionistic pictures frequently involve evocative lists: "...comme un immense kaleidoscope. Des centaines de longues oreilles, de seins nus, de poitrines d'hommes bardes de colliers multicolores, de bras et de jambes noirs de tatouages, et puis des sarongs, des chapeaux a plumes!" (p80)

And again, "Elles s'occupent aussi de leur jardin potager, dans lequel elles plantent du gingembre, des epices, de la canne a sucre, du cafe, des ananas, des concombres, des haricots geants, des patates douces..." and so on. (p82)

There is also some well-judged personal detail, e.g. taking a "shower" - which turns out to be a "grosse jarre pleine d'eau et aussi une casserole en matiere plastique rouge". (p22) On another occasion she creeps outside during the night because of an "urgent petit besoin" and is bitten/stung by a centipede. She is treated most carefully and considerately: "Quelle gentillesse, quelle douceur chez les hommes rudes (d'autres diraient "sauvages")." (p69)

Mady Villard certainly doesn't see the people as savages. She makes friends like O'Hanlon, MacDonald and many others; she is, however, a woman - and, unlike Dickson or Johnson, a

woman alone. "La question de race n'entre pas en ligne de compte, mais je sais déjà que je suis la seule femme qui soit jamais allée chez les Kelabit." The question of race never arose, but I was already aware that I was the only woman to stay with the Kelabits.

The journey is tiring and at times dangerous. She frequently admits to being apprehensive, especially as she braves the rapids in the time and travel honoured way. Here and elsewhere, her thoughts and feelings are recorded as if she is talking to the reader.

As with many other travellers the most detailed conversations are recounted in direct speech - though obviously recalled later (and in Villard's case translated *from* English).

Is it Villard's luck or her personality which enable her to make her way so easily into the heart of Borneo? Granted, Gersi is attempting a more difficult journey, yet there seems to be a sense in which she is moving with the current whereas he is pushing against it.

To take one example, they are both attacked by leeches. Villard (the glamorous female journalist) describes their depredations in some detail, counting 83 on her left leg and not having the courage to count those on her right... (p72) but with a stoical humour. Gersi (the tough male adventurer) reacts with disgust and horror, concluding a long description with "La sangsue represente pour moi la bete de cauchemar!" (nightmare).

Mady Villard's almost accidental adventure is as amazing, in its way, as Domalain's. Yet, despite the exclamations and the often overly emotional prose, there is an underlying matter-of-factness about the tone - very much in the mode of Barclay and O'Hanlon.

Like them, she had no particular place to go, no particular motive for going. Like them she made friends wherever she went, was never patronising and enjoyed the culture of the country.

She had no official backing and no army of servants - and no sense of the rightness of what she was undertaking. It is, once more, a personal journey for personal reasons. Observation has become more of an internal activity, less of an external one. There is no imperative to keep a scholarly log, only a diary...

*

Personal journeys for personal reasons, diaries of thoughts and reactions, idiosyncratic motivations... we have come a long way from Spenser St John and Hose and Enriquez. But how far? Is it the nature of the traveller that has changed or the nature of the writing? Is it only a matter of style - or have attitudes and approaches changed too?

Is it perhaps the nature of the times that travel writing consists of the kind of accounts that O'Hanlon, Barclay, Villard et al provide: personal and informal, laid back and uncommitted? Can there be no other way, no other style? To answer these questions we can turn to Arnold and Hanbury-Tenison, two modern explorers with proper excuses. Then we will be in a position to draw some more general conclusions.

Chapter 5 - The Last Tramps?

Finally, let us consider two latter-day explorers who seem to be Tramps with the Same Old Excuse. The increasing difficulty of finding new places to explore is evinced in two ways. In our most recent exploration by Hanbury-Tenison, there is the need to reach ever more inaccessible locations - and to be resupplied by air. Secondly by the tendency to make the journey more difficult by travelling alone or with a very small party, as with Barclay or O'Hanlon. Hence we should not be surprised by titles from the early 21st century such as Blindfold in Borneo or Bicycling up the Baram.

Having brought our investigation full circle with our consideration of Arnold and Hanbury-Tenison, we will review the whole range of traveller-writers in Borneo and present some conclusions.

Guy Arnold: *Longhouse and Jungle: an expedition to Sarawak*

Guy Arnold's expedition continues the line of what we have come to see as "real" explorers. It is a highly organized, well-planned undertaking with substantial backing which includes air drops of supplies.

His acknowledgements are to Oxford University, the Royal Geographical Society, the Sarawak Government and the Army and RAF in Singapore. He also spends a week as the guest of Tom Harrisson. All of the members of the expedition - four graduates and a host of locally recruited assistants and porters are listed. The plans and the route are presented, together with a detailed map.

Indeed, the logistics of the expedition assume a predominance - the first sixty pages are mainly concerned with organizing supplies and porters and while it is quite interesting to hear the details about how to calculate the number of porters required and dividing up loads into 72 equal weights, after a while it becomes confusing and somewhat pointless.

Although archaeological work is Arnold's *raison d'être*, we learn that he has "never done any...before going on this

expedition" and the conclusion to all the excavations is summed up in three hundred words. Academic detail is rare. Presumably the author and his companions wrote up their researches and discoveries elsewhere. As it is, the greatest detail comes in recounted local stories, especially origin myths.

Like many before him, Arnold is captivated by the local people. He clearly enjoys his "first experience of the extraordinary charm, humour and high spirits of the Borneo people." What is interesting about remarks such as "he had a courtesy and consideration for others far greater than that of many so called civilised Europeans" is not that it is the same kind of remark we find in so many of the archetypal explorers, but that we would not expect to find it in Barclay or O'Hanlon; that is, they would not feel it necessary to make that feeling explicit.

The tone is genial without any attempt at humour. The impression is of someone enjoying themselves without needing to tell you so.

Arnold writes in an easy, lightweight prose in which it is difficult to pin down any personal style. "Flanked by sheer rocky cliffs and towering green jungle, the massed waters of the great river pour over a ten foot bar of rock, its glassy surface breaking into angry waves, a cauldron of whirlpools and eddies" (p73) is as lyrical as he permits himself. There is no sensationalism whether about head-hunting or the rigours of the journey or eating sago with the Penan (which though far less strange than some meals eaten by Domalain) could well have been sensationalized.

Rain, leeches, insects, the rice question, path-finding, and river fording are listed as problems and discomforts, which are described but not dwelt on: "This was the beginning of a six month's work and jungle travel, of living in leaf shelters amid the discomforts of rain, leeches, sandflies and other pests, a life that can be very monotonous, yet whose solitude and remoteness have their attractions." (p51)

"By the end of the day my legs were covered with sores and red and dirty with blood ... became used to leeches after a time, and derived some satisfaction from comparing the totals collected from my legs at the end of each day." (p74)

Here we notice the *sang froid* of the model explorer, making light of unpleasantness and pursuing the business of the day

without fuss. There is a complete absence of self-congratulation or drama. For instance, he remarks, as an aside, "On this trip too I killed my first boar..." Just that. The expedition must have been hard going - for example, walking all day and then spending the night out in the jungle and walking the next day especially as on another occasion he reveals, "I woke very early with a bad attack of asthma, which troubled me for most of this trip." Stiff upper lip indeed.

Though a personal account, Arnold's is not as personal as say Barclay or Domalain. He keeps the reader at a discreet distance. This feeling is enhanced by the very sparing use of direct speech. The whole book is very proper without appearing prim. We certainly would be shocked if Arnold used the word arse or talked about whores.

Arnold's final paragraph reads: "The receding green coastline of Borneo, washed by a calm and shimmering sea, looked as peaceful and alluring as I had found it a year before. But now I carried with me memories of lively long-house parties, of great rocks and waterfalls, mountains and gorges, the timeless solitude of the jungle and the charm and friendliness of the Borneo peoples - Dayak, Kayan, Kenyah, Kelabit and Penan - who shared their lives with us for 6 months in a little known backwater of the world." (p206) Had we read this as the conclusion to Harrisson or Lumholtz or most of the other earlier explorers, would we have found it out of place?

To recap, "The typical explorer is knowledgeable about the country through which he travels ... has companions of similar status to his own and is generally in charge or joint-charge of the expedition. The expedition employs numerous servants, whether guides, interpreters, cooks or porters. There is much baggage, including provision for samples of flora and fauna to be preserved. The expedition enjoys the backing (official or unofficial) of either government or well placed civil servants and/or some prestigious learned society. The explorer may also have been resident as a government official in that country ... for some time. He has firm opinions and believes that he is serving mankind in one way or another." (see above, p6).

Arnold has few noticeable "firm opinions" and makes no explicit claims about serving mankind (though presumably the aim of the expedition is to push back the frontiers of knowledge) but in all other respects, this is an accurate description.

Like our model, he is indeed modest and the tone of his writing does reveal an underlying confidence in the rightness of his actions and beliefs. Furthermore, as we have already noted, there is very little in the way of personal details of activity or thought and feeling.

It cannot be said, however, that Arnold reveals clear cut prejudices about racial groups and women nor is there evidence of "benign paternalism". Like Tillema, while his style of writing is balanced, it lacks the urbanity and wit of writers such as Enriquez and Harrisson. He is as good an explorer but a less engaging writer.

Robin Hanbury-Tenison: *MULU: The Rain Forest*

Just when we might have thought there were no more explorers - along comes Robin Hanbury-Tenison.

The author's introduction to Borneo comes via the Bishop of Miri so we are not starting at the bottom. Further, his closest friend is the director and secretary of the Royal Geographical Society and there is an Afterword by Lord Shackleton! There was support from WWF and it became an official RGS expedition. Exploration is not a working class activity.

The expedition is prompted by the threat to the forest, to discover while it was still there to be discovered. The goal was the tropical rain forest, which part of it was not decided until later. Borneo was decided upon first, then Sarawak, then Gunung Mulu (just then being designated as a National Park).

There is a detailed account of the setting up of the expedition - in marked contrast to Harrisson's idiosyncratic beginning - closer to Tillema's and Arnold's, though nowhere near as obsessively detailed.

The tone is business-like. The items described at length by MacDonald and others: longhouses, rice wine, songs and dances, are summarised in two paragraphs. The book itself is briskly divided into two parts: The Expedition and The Work and is dedicated "For all Mulu people".

The style is clear and somewhat neutral though there are moments of enthusiasm and lyricism. "Everything was silver and black, the leaves etched in a glittering tracery against the sky, the trees dark silhouettes and the water still as ebony in front and broken milky waves behind." (p37)

Again, "Perching high on a narrow ridge, with the sound of the rushing rivers far below carrying through the clear air, accompanied by the amplified hum of untold millions of insects, the occasional cry of a hornbill or the whoop of a gibbon, seems the perfect way to end a day. The tall cliffs and crags of still unclimbed Benarat across the gorge catch the orange evening light on one side, while far away on the other the Tutoh river curls across the flat lands to the sea; the mists begin to swirl and spiral upwards between the tortured Arthur

Rackham trees bringing a welcome chill so that to crawl into a damp sleeping bag is close to heaven."

This passage is somewhat unusual in its personal tone; most of the account is rather more distanced. He does, though, create a good sense of what it was like to be there. "...Stretching out aching limbs on a hammock, examining and treating wounds, blisters and rashes was a wonderful relief; writing up note by Tilley lamp or candlelight, eating rice and a dubious hot stew tasting predominantly of oxtail from a tin plate while the rain teemed down outside and thundered on the roof, these are things we will remember with varying degrees of affection and nostalgia. "More rice, Tuan?" always asked anxiously, for we ate too little rice by Berewan standards and they always cooked too much by ours..." (p54) Together with a sense of the actual business of exploration: "a fairly short scramble through semi-darkness, knee deep in mud and guano, and over giant boulders crawling with earwigs and daylight is reached again we came suddenly and unexpectedly to a parapet which overlooked the vast entrance cavern 200 feet wide and twice as high." (p79)

One chapter is devoted to personalities - the expedition involved over a hundred people - and shows Hanbury-Tenison's skill in clear (though still somewhat neutral) character description... some are a masterpiece of understatement. "Uschi, a curvaceous Swiss strudel whose speciality, apart from apple pie (using pineapples) and rosti (using yams instead of potatoes), lay in cuddling the depressed and making the lonely feel loved." It is mainly a description of what they did rather than what they were like, however.

"Few were motivated, as is often the case on other expeditions, simply by a desire to have an exciting time in an exotic environment; indeed their very professionalism and expertise made them better able to appreciate the fascination and interest of this beautiful country than the average tourist or explorer. Too many people on holiday or adventure safaris become wrapped up in the mundane business of simply travelling and fail to observe what they are travelling through." (p41)

"Many more such spectacular connexions await future intrepid explorers on the slopes of the Api ... the cavers maintained at the end that the exploration potential had barely been touched..." (p84)

Hanbury-Tenison's book is not always an easy read. He is knowledgeable and able to turn much of the academic information into layman's terms, but the chapter on The Vegetation, for example, is basically a series of descriptions of botanists and plants. Other chapters on the Ecology of the Forest, Mammals and Birds, and Reptiles Fishes and Insects (how well organized everything is!) are similarly densely written.

He does have a gift of conveying information without being tedious - after a paragraph about aphids, he writes "I found snippets of information like that, revealed by the scientists as they went about their routine and often apparently monotonous tasks, one of the best things about being on the expedition." (p131) It is also one of the best things about this account, the way the writer reveals snippets of information about so many abstruse subjects.

The book ends with appendices of Latin/English glossary of birds and mammals, a breakdown of the members of the expedition with their areas of study and a bibliography.

Hanbury-Tenison takes a different approach to the old favourite of leeches. He is fairly scientific - as one would expect - and dismisses the much repeated claim in other texts that leeches will leave their heads behind if pulled off. He also takes part in one of the party's researches which involves having leeches feeding off him. "They took so little blood that the sacrifice was only a small one, although the wound would bleed rather disgustingly for some time afterwards. Some status could be gained by selecting the larger and stronger specimens but only Sue's husband John and I achieved the ultimate accolade of becoming "three tiger-leech men". (p33)

Here we see again the explorer's *sang froid*. Even in the following situation we can be sure that Hanbury-Tenison showed no signs of panic at the time. "We were only holding ourselves on to the mountain by the rotten vegetation, whole mats of which were liable to pull away and plummet down through nearly 3000 feet of space below us. It was impossible to use ropes because of the tangled undergrowth and I have seldom been as frightened in my life."

So how different is Hanbury-Tenison to the explorers who precede him? Not very, it would seem. He has the kind of

status, backing and entourage of which any of the explorers considered in Chapter Two would have been proud. Like Arnold and in common with our archetype he is modest and the tone of his writing reveals that underlying confidence in the rightness of his actions and beliefs. The style of his writing is balanced and detached and, as we have already noted, there is little in the way of the personal, whether it be anecdotes of events or recollections of thoughts and feelings. The only significant difference lies in the absence of paternalism and prejudice.

Explorers, Travellers, Tourists: Some Conclusions.

"Few were motivated, as is often the case on other expeditions, simply by a desire to have an exciting time in an exotic environment; indeed their very professionalism and expertise made them better able to appreciate the fascination and interest of this beautiful country than the average tourist or explorer. Too many people on holiday or adventure safaris become wrapped up in the mundane business of simply travelling and fail to observe what they are travelling through." (Hanbury-Tenison p41)

Thus Hanbury-Tenison criticizes those tramps without an excuse who he feels are merely seeking excitement. However, though Barclay, O'Hanlon, Villard et al are examples, surely, of people motivated largely by "a desire to have an exciting time in an exotic environment" they are by no means typical of the "average explorer". The average explorers - or at least those who recorded their travels - were professional in the extreme, and very similar in outlook and actions to Hanbury-Tenison himself. It is more likely that he has in mind a genus of "explorer" more akin to Alder, Ivanoff and Gersi, who make naive claims and set goals which they fail to achieve.

Evidence from the writers we have studied would, though, seem to support his general hypothesis that the better prepared someone is for a journey, the more likely is he or she to appreciate it. Those who have gone with learning and were prepared to learn, have learnt. Those who have travelled with prejudice, unprepared to learn, have not. Travel broadens the mind of those with minds already broad - a sad but not very surprising conclusion. "If an ass goes travelling, he'll not come

home a horse," as Thomas Fuller remarked in his *Gnomologia* of 1732.

Certainly the asses took with them more racial stereotypes than the horses, but almost all make some generalizations about racial or tribal groups, even where these are entirely complimentary. Where one writer takes a dislike to the Chinese, another takes against Malays and yet another against the Iban, often praising those criticized by a previous writer. As time passes, these generalizations become less crude and more likely to be about cultural differences than racial characteristics.

The picture of the writer-explorer remains remarkably steady over time. From Hose to Hanbury-Tenison, he is male (though the latest expeditions are likely to include women), accompanied by peers, backed by governments or institutions and in charge. He will lead a considerable entourage and take lots of equipment, some of it highly specialized, according to the specialisms of the expedition's personnel and aims.

He will be sure of the rightness of his mission, confident in himself and his companions. He is knowledgeable and has planned and researched minutely. Seriousness of intent permeates all, and the driving motivation is the pursuit of knowledge. It is not so much a question of going where no man has set foot before but *of finding out what no man has found out before*.

His tone is cool, the epitome of *sang froid*, and tends away from the really personal. In his style he is balanced and measured, avoiding direct humour and anything with a hint of sensationalism; there may be some mildly lyrical passages but overall his will be a restrained though heartfelt enthusiasm.

In times of danger or discomfort, the explorer-writer remains calm. Or to be more accurate, the written account of such times will remain calm, though one has a strong suspicion that upper lips retained their stiffness under very trying circumstances. They do not set out to shock or sensationalize. Works which bear somewhat sensational titles, such as Haddon or Bock, are full of propriety inside the covers. One suspects the publishers of being the ones choosing racy titles, then as now.

The differences over time are few. More recent writers exhibit a less urbane and ironic style and show a development from

paternalism to egalitarianism, from a certain amount of prejudice about racial groups and women to very little. Otherwise, where the contemporary or near-contemporary explorer exists, he is very close in his attributes to his Victorian counterpart. Put Arnold next to Tillema next to Hose: the similarities will far outweigh any differences.

However, as we saw in Chapter 3, with the exception of MacDonald and Dickson, the Tramps with Different Excuses differed profoundly from the "real" explorers. They were likely to be more prejudiced and derogatory, and to bring their stereotypes with them and impose them on what they found. They were less reflective, less likely to learn from their experience or to question Western values. They had carried out little research, were not very knowledgeable and were more prone to sensationalism. It might not be too unfair to suggest that their views were likely to have been learnt from the *Boys Own* or from writers aping Hemingway. They tended to write in a more personal way but in a less urbane, understated style, with less irony or reflection. In times of stress, they were more likely to give vent to their frustrations and less likely to make light of the dangers and discomforts they experienced. (Interestingly, they also seemed *more likely* to encounter frustration and discomfort.) Similarly, there is more evidence of a desire to shock or titillate the reader - more references to head-hunters, snakes and all that might be dark and deadly in the forest. All in all, we concluded, travel was unfortunately unlikely to broaden *their* minds.

The Tramps Without an Excuse, those with no timetable and no one to meet, are different again and make a fascinating contrast with both groups.

The nature of their expeditions tends to be different. A much smaller party is the norm - down to the minimum: the traveller alone. They tend to have less knowledge than our model explorer but a good deal more than the Tramps with Different Excuses. Overall they are less serious in intent, more likely to go off on a whim, to take a two hundred mile side-trip for the hell of it... The underlying motivation may still be curiosity but it is cloaked in fewer grand or noble motives and most of the writers are very ready to question Western values.

Somewhere along the way, also, the character of the traveller has changed from that of an Establishment figure to his antithesis. For all his eccentricities, the model explorer is a

representative of the establishment. The travellers described in Chapter Four have more in common with the drop-out or the hippy. Why journeying through tough, dangerous country should attract both types remains an intriguing question.

Notwithstanding these differences, there remains a similarity with the model explorer in the sense of a belief in the rightness of their actions. Even the Tramps without an Excuse believe they are doing the right thing. O'Hanlon and Domalain are as confident, in their own way, as Hose and St John. Beneath their self-deprecation and modesty there is an innate belief in themselves. There is little questioning of the very notion of exploring, with all its connotations of the superior looking at and recording the activities of the inferior. (Not that Barclay and those like him would consciously feel superior - they would be shocked at the suggestion - they would be more likely to claim that they were there to learn from the Iban or Penan.) However much they maintained that position, though, the fact remains that they have travelled from the First World to look at the Third World and have something in common with the tourist tanning on the tropical beach attended by a dark-skinned, low-paid waiter as we pointed out in Chapter One.

In spite of this, The Tramps without an Excuse share with the latter day explorers an easy egalitarianism and lack of prejudice which is in most noticeable contrast to some of the Tramps with Different Excuses.

In terms of style these Excuseless Tramps write in a way which is much more personal, and are also far more likely to include humorous and sensational passages.

The *sang froid* of the earlier writers is still there but in a somewhat altered form. They are laid-back rather than urbane but they share - most of them - a self-deprecating attitude which eschews heroics. Their emotions are more likely to be described, but still likely to be restrained, dangers to be made light of, notwithstanding exceptions like Douchan Gersi. Some of these writers do sensationalize - but even here, it is the writers of the dust-jacket descriptions or paperback cover blurbs who constitute the main culprits.

Unlike the Model Explorer, the Tramps Without an Excuse include in their accounts a great deal of what the lay reader finds most fascinating: details of the small, mundane and personal. Both in style and content, these writers have in mind

a general readership; no one is excluded because of a lack of knowledge or specialization.

They follow a trend, distinguishable in MacDonald, of really getting under the surface of the country, of sharing the culture fully. They do not dance with the longhouse girls in order to discharge a duty or to be polite, but because they enjoy dancing with them. They don't sip, they take long draughts. The gain is their greater insight into some aspects of Borneo life. The loss is an inevitable reduction in focus. They zoom in on the personal with great effect but we tend to lose something of the panorama of society.

One of the consequences of the increasing personalization of travel writing is that fewer generalizations are made, including those about race. Comments, positive or negative, are likely to be about individuals and - from time to time - villages, rather than whole racial groups.

To risk a parallel with novelists: a broad generalization might be that nineteenth century novels tended to include a broad sweep of society and include a multiplicity of themes and issues. The twentieth century novel has tended to become more inward-looking and narrowly focussed. From *Middlemarch* to *Ulysses*, *Bleak House* to *To The Lighthouse*. This movement can be detected in the travel writing we have looked at: from the broad canvas of St John to the miniature of Domalain. However, with the travel writers, change has happened much more recently, certainly after 1945 and most noticeably in the last twenty years.

The personal miniature always existed in travel writing but there is now the additional factor of simply fewer places to explore. If we can't explore, we have to merely travel. Our horizons narrow. We look inward. It is less and less possible to find out something new about the world out there - so we begin to travel in order to discover something new about the world in here - Hansen being a prime example. This concern, though, does not mean that the outside world is less evident. As we have just pointed out, the accounts contain detailed and compelling descriptions of the writer's travels and travails.

However, in spite of the narrowing of focus and the increased role played by the writers' inner feelings, our survey suggests (somewhat paradoxically) that travel writing has become more, not less, like traditional narrative. Though many of the

accounts of the writer-explorers contain considerable narrative drive those of the Tramps Without an Excuse are even more strongly driven by what we might think of as a traditional narrative force. The resemblances to scholarly reference books are absent, while the similarity to old-fashioned adventure in which one knew who was the hero, understood the time sequence and expected (and received) a satisfactory (and usually happy) ending is marked. Hence the feeling that travel writing has to some extent become the continuation of the traditional novel by other means.

We noted earlier also the existence of a similarity of style and approach in the accounts of the explorer-writers. We asked whether this was due to the existence of a perceived style for the genre or whether the class and culture of the writers impelled them to write that way. Interestingly, the Tramps Without a Excuse also exhibit a similarity of style - and the same question can be posed.

We can add to the evidence the fact that the two examples of modern writer-explorers' accounts (Arnold and Hanbury-Tenison) are markedly different in style to those writers.

From what we know of their backgrounds, the class and culture of Arnold and Hanbury-Tenison does not differ significantly from that of Barclay, Linklater et al. Thus it seems likely that travel writing is more a product of a commonly perceived genre than a more general cultural phenomenon. It is not the case that these writers come from very different cultural backgrounds. However, their journeys differ and their ways of writing about those journeys differ. From the stylistic choices available, Hanbury-Tenison chooses one, Linklater another. Their choice may be constrained by the cultural totality within which they write (indeed the choice may be partly sub-conscious) but it is nevertheless a choice. Moreover it seems that not only does the style of writing conform to a type but so also does the style of expedition.

The style and approach, then, seems to be related to the attitude of the traveller to travelling and by extension to the attitude to the environment through which he or she travels. Arnold and Hanbury-Tenison have one kind of attitude to travel, Barclay, Linklater et al have another.

Thus we would not expect to see changes in the way travel is written about unless there occurs a change or development in

the attitude of the traveller-writer to the act of travelling. The likelihood of that development is one of the concerns of the following section.

*

Why travel? Why write? The common thread through all our travellers is curiosity. Sometimes a noble curiosity (to discover more about the origins of man or the extent of the plant world) and sometimes a selfish (or personal) curiosity (to discover how they react to severe conditions or unusual situations) and sometimes just sheer human curiosity (what's it like in the jungle? are there really head-hunters?)

The motivations for writing are more varied and more difficult to ascertain but again range from the noble (to present scientific findings to the world) to the selfish (to boast of one's exploits) with again a good dash of the very human: the desire to record and reflect on experience.

Evelyn Waugh, in his foreword to Eric Newby's *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush*, remarks of Newby's motivation: "It was the longing, romantic, reasonless, which lies deep in the hearts of most Englishmen, to shun the celebrated spectacles of the tourist and without any concern with science or politics or commerce, simply to set their feet where few civilised feet have trod. ... a whimsical tradition. And in his writing he has all the marks of his not entirely absurd antecedents. The understatement, the self-ridicule, the delight in the foreignness of foreigners, the complete denial of any attempt to enlist the sympathies of his readers in the hardships he has capriciously invited."

Waugh's attempt to categorize these characteristics as peculiarly English is amusing, given the range of nationalities we have considered. We cannot even be sure that they are peculiarly European, or Western, though that seems more likely. What is interesting, however, is his perception of a certain whimsical tradition, which we have also noticed, together with the common characteristic of understatement. But while the understatement, the restraint, has always been there, the whimsicality, the lack of definable motive, has not. The explorers, English or otherwise, have been motivated by science (and to a lesser extent by politics, religion or commerce) throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The whimsical attitude to travel has developed as a separate strand

and one which has grown stronger as this century has grown older.

Something else which has grown stronger with the century is tourism: from a handful of aristocrats to millions of ordinary people in little over a century. No travel writer we have considered would expect to be called a tourist. Perhaps no one likes to be called a tourist. How accurate, though, is it to separate travel writers from tourists? Krippendorf reports a survey carried out in 1986 which asked "What were the main reasons for your holiday journey?" The top 12 responses throw an interesting light on the similarities and differences between exploration and tourism:

- to switch off, relax
- to get away from everyday life
- to recover strength
- to experience nature
- to have time for one another
- to get sunshine
- to be with other people
- to eat well
- to have a lot of fun and entertainment
- to do as one pleases, to be free
- to experience a great deal, to have a lot of change
- to experience something entirely different, see new things

While some of these are a long way from the experiences of the writers we have considered, particularly the explorers, might expect or desire, others are not. Consider "to get away from everyday life", "to experience nature", "to experience a great deal..." or "to experience something entirely different..." It would seem that our writer-travellers do have something in common with many tourists.

That overlap, however, does not make them tourists. As Krippendorf makes clear, tourism is holidaymaking and is characterized by *a going away from*. The travel of the explorers is characterized by *a going towards*. Even Barclay and those like him are drawn towards the interior, rather than escaping from the urban or sophisticated. But, as Hansen says, "Travel is the act of leaving familiarity behind. Destination is a mere by-product of the journey" - and so the post-war travellers are characterized simply by a *going*. Moreover, our writers are not on holiday, not at leisure, in the same way that tourists are. To quote John Urry (*The Tourist Gaze*) "The development of mass tourism was an aspect of the separation of work and leisure that characterized social development in

the nineteenth century." The tourist, the holiday-maker, works when not travelling and associates travel with leisure. Travel in the sense that the writers about Borneo experience it does not separate work and leisure - or if there is some separation, it is the reverse: the writer-explorer or writer-traveller works when s/he travels and rests when not travelling.

In spite of the stated desire "to experience something entirely different", the tourist does not travel too far from what is familiar, however many miles have been covered. The explorers, on the other hand, craved the unfamiliar while carrying with them huge baggage trains of equipment one of whose purposes was to recreate the laboratory or study or smoking-room in the forest. The latter-day tramps, in general, would subscribe more to Hansen's aim: "What I wanted from my journey was a unique experience, something so far beyond my comprehension that I would have to step completely out of my skin to understand and become part of my surroundings."

The writers we have studied, then, are not tourists. The tourist takes the way-marked path, other travellers use tracks and a map, the explorer may have no map at all. And lest we feel that the latter are naturally superior to the former, we should bear in mind that the former, on the way-marked path, may do less damage, be less intrusive, than his or her more adventurous counterparts.

*

The conclusions we have reached about travel writing in Borneo will, I suggest, be broadly applicable to other areas of the world. The distinctions between the various types of tramp will be equally appropriate in Central Africa or South America. Where the situation would be significantly different is Europe, a study of which would make an interesting comparison.

What of the future of travel-writing? If the trends we have noticed continue, and there is no reason to believe that they will not, we will see less and less exploration and fewer large expeditions. There will be more individual, possibly "whimsical" travels undertaken in increasingly idiosyncratic ways. In the same way that awareness of prejudice has grown and colonial attitudes have declined, it seems likely that ecological and environmental awareness will increase, together with an understanding of the social and economic effects that travel, individual or mass, inevitably create.

This is the most likely cause of a further change or development in the attitude of the traveller to travelling and as it occurs we would expect there to be a corresponding change in the style and approach of the writer.

Having said that, I suspect that whatever the attitude and the century, there will always be those who, like the tourist, only perceive scenery, others who appreciate figures in a landscape and still others like the explorer, who insist on classifying them.

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